

Frances Calthorpes Book

SERMONS

TO

COUNTRY CONGREGATIONS.

by the late

Rev. George Haggitt, A. M.



SERMONS
TO
COUNTRY CONGREGATIONS.

BY THE LATE

REV. GEO. HAGGITT, A.M.

Rector of Beechamwell, Norfolk.

VOL. I.

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1796

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COUNTRY CONNECTIONS



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transmission in 1703, which is

transmission he changed in 1703 for

the adjoining parish of Mileham

and Lexham. He died January

31st 1705, after a short illness, in

THE writer of the following pages was born October 12, 1757: was educated at Harrow School: became a member of Clare-hall in Cambridge January 1775: and was elected a Fellow of that society in 1779. In 1782 he received the degree of Master of Arts: and vacated his Fellowship by marriage in 1786. In 1788 he became the resident minister of the parishes of Mileham and

Fransham in Norfolk ; which situation he changed in 1793 for the adjoining parishes of Litcham and Lexham. He died January 31st 1795. after a short illness, in the 38th year of his age.

It may be imagined, perhaps by many, that a life, of which such was the outline, must have been as useless and insipid, as it was short and retired. Not such, however, will be the judgment of those whom experience or observation may have taught more justly to appreciate the character of an exemplary parish priest. Such will be aware, that to consti-

tute

tute that character, there must be an union of learning and modesty; of spirit and of patience, that a marked detestation of vice must be made consistent with unabated charity for the offender, that the conduct of the man must never be at variance with the precepts of the preacher, that reproof must be tempered with gentleness; faith be made manifest by works; and zeal be directed by knowledge.

Whoever, indeed, can estimate the advantages which result to society from the exertions of a man at once sufficiently dignified and

conciliating to “reprove, rebuke,
“and exhort with all long-suffer-
“ing and doctrine;” who can
win over the rich to temperance
and charity; and the poor to ho-
nest industry and contentment :
above all, whoever reflects on the
blessedness of turning but one
sinner from the error of his ways
unto righteousness, will admit, that
when the conscientious discharge
of such duties is chosen by any
one as the basis on which to build
his character, his labours (albeit
hidden in the deepest retirement)
are still directed to an end not
unworthy the commendation of
the

the wisest men, or the gratitude of the best.

The following discourses constitute the principal labours of their author in his ministry. The species of merit, on which their editor founds his hope of their being well received by the public, is their plainness: and it was with a reference to this quality that he has intimated in the title page the auditors to whom they were delivered. The reader is requested to carry this in his recollection while he peruses them; because it accounts for, and gives a value to, their great simplicity

of composition, and unornamented language; and is, at the same time, a mark of the carefulness with which their author accommodated himself to the duties of his situation. How far he was successful in this branch of his Christian duty, the publication of them will enable many to judge. how well his conduct accorded with his precepts can be known only within the limits of a less extended circle. Not a few, however, can bear testimony to a temper unruffled by accidents, and a cheerfulness which never degenerated into levity: to much learn-

TO THE READER

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learning, and great sedulity: to strict self-regimen: to a judgement which could discern frailties, and a candour which failed not to extenuate them: to affability which encouraged the reserved, and decorum which repressed the forward: to kindness in general intercourse, and warmth in particular friendship: to active charity and unwearied zeal for the relief of the temporal and spiritual wants of all around him. The few who knew him still more intimately witnessed the exact fulfilment of the duties of a Son, a Brother, an
Hus-

Husband, and a Father: and cannot plead the want of an example of that more extended Charity which "seeketh not her own, "and thinketh no evil:" of that more exalted Wisdom, which "whoso findeth, findeth Life."

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THE early and sudden death of the writer of these sermons makes it certain that they were not prepared, or indeed intended, by him, for publication. They are the discourses he preached in the execution of his parochial duty. It is possible therefore that they may contain passages taken from other writers, and which are unacknowledged. The editor knows not that they are liable to this censure: wherever his own recollection has enabled

enabled him to make such a discovery, he has pointed it out: if more such instances are to be found (he trusts they are not) he begs the blame may rest with him, not with the deceased writer, who certainly never intended to have made this use of them. In fact, the editor was urged to publish the sermons, as he found them, by some of the neighbouring friends of the deceased; who having witnessed the good effects they produced in the parishes in which they were delivered, wished to give them a more extended circulation.

One

One topic which he urged with great earnestness and success, was a frequent attendance on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Of his discourses on this subject but one will be found in this collection; because, in his life-time, he digested the others into the form of a pamphlet, which he published; and which was productive of very beneficial effects in his neighbourhood, as well by removing the scruples of the fearful, as by awakening the attention of the negligent, and informing the minds of the uninstructed.

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Erratum---p. 4, l. 5. For Mrs. Brooke, ditto, read

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SERMON I.

ON THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.

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*As the body without the spirit is dead, so
faith without good works is dead also.*

TITUS iii. 8.

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I
will that thou affirm constantly, that they
which have believed in God, might be care-
ful to maintain good works.*

FROM the first rise of christianity down to SERM.
this present time, there has always existed I.
a set of designing or deluded men, calling
themselves christians, who have maintained
the doctrine of faith in opposition to that of
good works; who have imagined, or pre-

VOL. I.

B

tended

SERM. ~~tended to imagine, that a belief in the life,~~
 I. death, and resurrection of our Saviour, and
 in the miraculous circumstances which accompanied each, would exempt them from the practice of the moral virtues, and leave them to the free indulgence of their lawless and unruly passions.

This doctrine of theirs they have grounded on certain selected passages of scripture, which they have explained in such a manner, as to make them contradict all the rest of it. They tell us of the frequent and vehement assertions of St. Paul, "of justification by the free grace of God," and "of being saved by faith alone," and "by faith without the works of the law;" and these expressions they so interpret as to make them counteract the whole design of religion. Salvation, say they, is the free gift of God; it is not of debt but of grace; it is not bestowed in consequence of any actions of ours, but gratuitously given through God's boundless mercy;

mercy; a lively faith in the merits of our SERM.
Redeemer is alone requisite on our parts; ^{I.}
what we do is out of the question; we have
but firmly to believe, and we shall be enti-
tled to an inheritance of life eternal.

I propose in this discourse to endeavour
to overthrow this pernicious opinion, first,
by explaining what learned men have in ge-
neral agreed to be the real meaning of the
passages which appear to make for it: se-
condly, by laying before you some strong
and clear quotations from the scriptures, in
which the virtues of a good life are insisted
on as indispensably necessary to salvation;
and lastly, by proving, from common sense
and reason, the absurdity of expecting the
favour of God and the rewards of Heaven
on any other terms than by adding to sound
faith good works.

And first, I will explain what learned men
have, in general, agreed to be the real mean-
ing of the passages, which are brought in

SERM. support of the opinion, that faith alone, un-
 I. accompanied by good works, is sufficient
 unto salvation.

It is very evident that when St. Paul makes use of the words election, vocation, adoption, justification, and some others of the like tenor, he does not always apply them to the *final judgment*; that is, he does not always mean that those who are elected, called, adopted, or justified, have already obtained, or shall certainly obtain, the kingdom of God. Recollect to whom his epistles were addressed, to those who had once been heathens, who had worshipped gods of wood and stone, or men frail and wicked as themselves, and who had no certain rule to live by, and scarce knew the difference between virtue and vice; but who had now embraced the christian religion, had become acquainted with the knowledge, which *that* inculcated, and entitled to the rewards, which *that* held forth.

This acquisition of the laws, and this title
 to

to the blessings of the gospel, thus bestowed SERM.
on the heathens, the Apostle calls their "be- I.
ing elected, adopted, justified;" and these
privileges he affirms them to have obtained
without previous good works, but merely by
the free grace of God, on their only believ-
ing in the truth of the religion which he had
sent down. Whenever then St. Paul talks of
justification without works, he always means
this first justification, men being made chris-
tians; but this is a very different thing from
final justification at the last day, to which
holiness, virtue, good works, are indispen-
sably necessary.

As to the expression of justification with-
out the works of the law, it sometimes means
without an observance of the rites and cere-
monies of the law of Moses, which some
early christians insisted to be requisite; but,
with respect to the moral part of that law,
our Saviour and his apostles constantly de-

SERM. clare that they do not come to destroy, but
 I. to fulfil it.

With these two keys I believe that every passage of scripture, which seems to favour the idea of the sufficiency of faith alone to salvation, may be otherwise explained; and I leave to every candid person to determine whether that interpretation, which makes a good book consistent with itself, is not to be preferred before that, which makes it at variance.

And this brings me to what I proposed in the second place, to lay before you some strong and clear quotations from the scripture, in which the virtues of a good life are insisted on as indispensably necessary to salvation. And here so many passages, to this purpose, press themselves upon me, that the only difficulty is to select and arrange them. The forerunner of our Saviour, John the Baptist, is described as opening the way for the gospel, by preaching repentance and re-
 mission

mission of sins, that is, by preaching that SERM.
 men should be forgiven on sorrow for past I
 wickedness, and amendment in future. Our
 Saviour also began his ministry by preach-
 ing repentance; "from that time began Jesus
 to preach and to say, repent, for the king-
 dom of heaven is at hand." Or as St. Mark
 in the parallel passage expresses it, "the
 time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at
 hand, repent ye and believe in the gospel."
 Not only believing, but forsaking of sin and
 turning to a life of virtue was required by
 him of his disciples. In his sermon on the
 mount he particularly insists on the practice
 of a variety of good qualities, and in one
 verse commands us to be exemplary, and
 even conspicuous, in the exercise of them in
 general; "let your light so shine before men,
 that they may see your *good works*, and glo-
 rify your Father, which is in heaven." In the
 same excellent discourse he tells his hearers,
 that except their righteousness, that is, their

SERM.

I.

practice of what is right, shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. And still more to my present purpose, he expressly declares, that not every one who shall say unto him "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he only that doeth the will of his father; as if he had said, Not they, who only profess themselves to be christians, and who believe and own me to be their master, but they who *do* what I teach shall obtain salvation. Nay, he goes still further, and tells them that though they shall have even performed miracles in his name, yet if they have been disobedient to his will, and lived wickedly, he shall, at the great day of judgment, reply to their claims of acquaintance and favour, "I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity."

You remember the parable of the king, who made a marriage feast for his son; those, who

who were invited, are distinguished into three SERM.
sorts: first, those who were asked and did I.
not come, by which are meant, those who had
the gospel proposed to them and did not embrace it: secondly, those who came, but had not on a wedding garment, those who had faith in Jesus, believing him to be the Christ, but were not new clad with a true repentance and amendment of life: thirdly, those who were invited and had on the wedding garment; those who both believed the gospel, and practised the precepts which it enjoins. Here you may observe, that belief without practice is equally condemned with unbelief: Bind him, says the king, speaking of the guest without a wedding garment, hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They only were allowed to remain at the feast, to sit down in the kingdom of heaven, who both attended to the invitation of the king and came properly prepared;

SERM. I.  pared; who both acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, and followed that course of life which he pointed out. It is likewise very worthy of your notice, that in all the places where our Saviour speaks of the day of judgment, the sentence follows on *doing or not doing*, without any mention of *believing*. In the fifth chapter of St. John are these words, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear my voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. In the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, speaking of the same day, he says "depart from me ye workers of iniquity." In the thirteenth, "the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which *do* iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." And again in the sixteenth chapter: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of
of

of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." SERM.
I.

This you will find invariably to be the manner of proceeding in all the other places of scripture where our Lord speaks of the last day; acceptance or condemnation are constantly annexed to doing or not doing, without any notice of believing: let me not, however, be misunderstood. I do not mean that faith in Christ is unnecessary; on the contrary, in those who have the gospel proposed to them it is absolutely necessary, but that faith which shews itself in a good life, is alone a faith unto salvation.

What doth it profit a man (saith St. James) though he say he hath faith and hath not works; can faith save him? Faith without works is dead, being alone; by works faith is made perfect. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. To conclude this head, it is evident beyond

SERM. ^I yond all dispute, from the whole tenor of the scriptures, that purity of conduct, as well as firmness of belief, is absolutely essential to entitle us to a place in the mansions of the blessed. But lastly, even if the scriptures had not spoken so expressly, the absurdity of expecting the favour of God, and the rewards of Heaven, on any other terms than by adding to a sound faith, good works, is evident from common sense and reason. God, it is universally agreed, possesses in the most perfect degree the attributes of purity and holiness; is it then at all credible that a being of this kind should send down, and reveal to his creatures, a religion which should let loose the reins to every corrupt passion, and authorize them in the indulgence of every evil inclination? which should hold forth to them the promise of eternal happiness on the sole condition of yielding their assent to some few points of faith, but should leave them under the same slavish submission to their lusts
in

in which it found them? It is not credible; SERM.
I.
every suggestion of sense and reason cries out against it. For consider whither such a position would carry us! Religion only aims to regulate our belief: very well; I firmly credit all which it requires of me, and on this ground I look for the rewards which it promises, let my practice be what it may; I will only take care not to subject myself to the punishment of human laws, and I will be as wicked as interest invites or impels me, fearless on this account of any after reckoning in futurity. Am I avaricious? I will take every opportunity of defrauding my neighbour of his property. Am I revengeful? neither the reputation nor the person of him who has accidentally injured me, or whose interest interferes with mine, shall be sacred from my attacks. Am I sensual? Let my friend beware of me; I will seduce from him the affections of his wife, or I will rob him of the innocence of his child; for so long as
I am

SERM. I am a *believer*, I can commit all these enormities unchecked or undisturbed by my conscience. Honour and honesty may here be alledged as restraints upon me; with some men I grant they would, but with far the majority they will be found feeble ties against the allurements of passion, supported by the hopes of impunity. You see then into what absurdities the idea of the sufficiency of faith without works leads; you perceive what a world this would be, if such a persuasion were universally prevalent.

Let us not then separate those two friends which agree so well together, religion and morality; let us not content ourselves with taking up the shield of faith, but let us put on, at the same time, the whole armour of righteousness; it is that alone which can empower us to withstand the assaults and be victorious over the malice of our grand adversary; it is that alone which can enable us to appear with decent confidence before the tribunal

bunal of our judge and Saviour. They wor- SERM.
ship God best who resemble him most; let I.
us then not only believe what he has revealed, 
but let us practise what he has commanded;
let us endeavour to be like him in purity and
goodness; let us conduct all which relates
to ourselves with decency and propriety; all
which concerns our fellow creatures with
justice and benevolence; let us possess our
own vessels with sanctification and honour,
and do unto others, as we would they should
do unto us.

SERMON

himself of our Judge and Saviour. They were sent
and God does what he pleases him most; let
us then not only believe what he has revealed,
but let us practice what he has commanded;
let us endeavour to be like him in purity and
goodness; let us conduct all which relates
to ourselves with decency and propriety; all
which concerns our fellow creatures with
justice and benevolence; let us possess our
own vessels with sanctification and honour,
and do unto others as we would they should
do unto us.

SERMON II.

ON STRIVING TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN.

ST. LUKE xiii. 24.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

FAR the greater number of people appear SERM.
II.
to be in a middle state between virtue and
vice; they are neither entirely good nor en-
tirely wicked; whenever they think on the sub-
ject, they will own that there are such places
as heaven and hell, and that they shall be re-
warded or punished after their death, according
as they shall have behaved themselves while
VOL. I. C they

SERM.

II.

they were in this world: but they shew sufficiently by their actions, that their belief is not firm and steady, otherwise they would not content themselves with seeking, with using some faint endeavours to gain the kingdom of Heaven, but would strive, would exert all their might to acquire that invaluable prize.

I propose, in this discourse, to point out to you, first, some of those persons who may be said to seek the kingdom of heaven, but who only seeking it shall not attain it; I propose, secondly, to shew what is meant by striving to gain the kingdom of heaven; and I propose, lastly, to bring forward the weighty motives by which we are urged to be amongst those who strive.

The first and lowest example, which I shall mention, of persons who seek the kingdom of Heaven, is that of those who content themselves with desires and wishes only; who think at times, what a delightful circumstance

stance it would be to enjoy everlasting happiness; and what a dreadful circumstance it would be, to be doomed to everlasting torments, and at those moments will call out "Lord, Lord," but who will not deny themselves in any one instance, or stir one single step besides.

SERM.

II.

• Can people of this description really expect that their wishes will be answered? I am sure they cannot reason by what they see passing on earth. Will wishing for any thing which is valuable be sufficient to obtain it here? Will wishes clothe a man, will wishes feed him, will wishes enable him to provide for his family? Can I, by desiring it only, become learned, rich, or respectable? No,—I must add to my desires, endeavours; I must exert myself; I must study or I must labour, and that not slightly, or now and then, but vigorously and without remission, or my desires will avail me nothing. And is it possible I can

SERM. for a moment flatter myself, that when it
II. requires so much pains to gain any earthly
good, I shall be advanced to everlasting
joys in heaven without any pains at all!
The thing speaks for itself.

But perhaps people, who content themselves with desires only, buoy themselves up with some general notions of the goodness and mercy of God; that God is merciful, is certain, but he is likewise just; he forgives sins, but not merely because we wish it; it is necessary that we pray heartily for his forgiveness, that we are sincerely sorry that we have done amiss, that we resolve steadily to do so no more, and that we *keep* our resolutions: these are the terms, the only terms of acceptance, as he has repeatedly declared in the holy scriptures. Both reason and scripture therefore join to assure us, that they, who build their expectation of heaven merely on their wishes, build on no foundation.

A second

A second description of persons that I shall notice, who may be said to seek the kingdom of heaven, are those whose endeavours are only exerted by fits and starts; who, on reading any good book, hearing any awakening discourse, or on having some serious thoughts suggested to them by God's holy spirit, are for awhile religious and virtuous, but in time of temptation fall away; they are unable to resist the solicitations of vicious companions, or the enticements of desires, to which they have been used heretofore to yield; their righteousness is like the early cloud and the morning dew; it so soon passes away. It is indeed preferable to uninterrupted wickedness, because it gives ground to hope that it may by degrees become more steady; but in itself it is of no avail; he who possesses it, can only be said to seek, not to strive after the kingdom of heaven, and has therefore no grounds from scripture to flatter himself

SERM.

II.

SERM. with success. "When a righteous man
 II.
 " turneth away from his righteousness,
 " and committeth iniquity, and dieth in
 " it, all his righteousness shall be counted
 " as nothing ; for his iniquity that he hath
 " done, shall he die."

In the third set of persons, who come within the meaning of the text, of seeking and not striving, we may reckon those, who have discarded all their frailties and sins except one, and who flatter themselves that their good behaviour in all other particulars will atone for a single deficiency. But they will find themselves miserably deceived: either the kingdom of heaven is, or is not an object worthy of being contended for; if it is not, let us drop all concern about it; let us eat, drink, and be merry; let us make ourselves as happy as we can in this world, without any thought of futurity; but if the kingdom of heaven be (as indeed it is) of the most consummate and inexpressible

pressible importance, if it be worthy that SERM.
we should consider every earthly good as II.
less than nothing in comparison of it, that
alone surely ought to occupy our care and
engross our affections; every thing else
ought to yield to it, for it is very certain
that one single preference of an earthly
good, if habitually indulged, will take away
all chance of attaining heaven. "Whoso-
ever shall keep the whole law (says St.
James) and yet offend in one point, he
is guilty of all," he is guilty of giv-
ing a preference to his lusts in one parti-
cular instance over his duty, of setting an
higher esteem upon things present than
things future, and therefore he must ex-
pect to reap the fruits of his absurdity in
being deprived of that reward, to which his
conduct in other respects, were it not for
this one deficiency, would entitle him. I
have heard of a person contending in a
race for a prize of vast importance, who

SERM. was prevented from winning it by turning
II. out of the way to pick up some golden
balls, which were from time to time thrown
down by the competitor for that purpose;
precisely similar is the folly of these persons
who suffer themselves to be diverted from
attaining the glorious prize of heaven, by
the riches, honours, or pleasures of this
world, which the adversary of our souls is
ever taking occasion to display before us.

Having given you these instances of persons who only seek to gain the kingdom of heaven, and who will therefore fail of the prize; I shall now set before you the character and conduct of one who strives, and who striving will be sure to obtain. Such an one, in the first place, does not content himself with bare wishes, as he well knows that he may profess *them* in common with the most abandoned of mankind; for however profligate a man may chuse to be in this world, he would certainly desire rather to be
happy

happy than miserable in the next ; though he SERM.
II.
may prefer the pleasures of vice, he would
clearly wish for the rewards of virtue ; though
he cannot prevail on himself to live the life
of the righteous, he would indubitably be re-
joiced to die his death. One who is in ear-
nest then with respect to obtaining heaven,
knows that to wish for it alone would be of
no service to him. Another thing also, of
which he is sensible, is, that to be devout by
fits and starts only, will not answer his pur-
pose ; his exertions to please God (which
can only be done by piety towards him, kind-
ness towards men, and by temperance, so-
briety, and chastity, in his own conduct)
must be constant and unremitted ; he does
not then put on these virtues only at particu-
lar times, and on particular occasions, but
makes them habitual to him ; he renders
himself so completely master of them, that
they pervade, they make a part of his whole
behaviour : another particular also, which he
knows

SERMON. knows to be necessary, and therefore strives
II. to attain, is, not merely to be obedient to
a part of God's commands, but to them all;
he knows, that though the Almighty will
take up with our imperfect obedience, if our
endeavours are sincere, yet that he will by
no means suffer us to live in the willing
breach of any one of his commands. Life
and death, God and the world are before us;
we must make our choice between them; if
we are resolved to indulge ourselves in any
one known sin, we plainly shew that there
is something which we prefer to God, and
we must take the consequences of our folly.
He who strives to obtain the kingdom of
heaven, may, and probably will, sometimes
fall, but he must not fall willingly; he must
exert himself against temptation; he must
recover himself as soon as possible; he must
be grieved and humbled by his frailty; and
he must use every effort to keep himself
more steady for the time to come. The
man

man who strives for the kingdom of heaven SERM.
II.
will, besides, never think that he is good enough; he will be still aspiring at higher degrees of perfection. Let it not be thought, by the command which is laid upon us to strive after the kingdom of heaven, that it is meant that we should pay no regard to the concerns of this world; on the contrary, God expects from us a diligent performance of our duties towards each other, as well as of our duty to him: now this cannot be done without an attention to worldly concerns. How shall a father provide for his family without applying to his particular profession, or working at his particular calling? How shall the greater part of mankind get even a subsistence, if they do not exert themselves in some kind, either of study or labour? without this, they must, generally speaking, either starve, or be a burthen upon their neighbours. How is the earth to be cultivated and its fruits produced,
if

2

SERM.

II.

if it were unlawful to attend at all to worldly business, and what would become of the human race if this were neglected? Besides, the dangers of idleness are great, and it is impossible that the immediate duties of religion can take up our whole time; it is therefore as clearly a part of our duty to follow some honest method of getting a livelihood, and to follow it with diligence, as it is the first part to pray to, to praise, and to offer up our thanks to God.

But it is time for me to pass to the third thing I proposed, which is, to shew the weighty motives by which we are urged to be in the number of those that strive. To this a few words will be sufficient.

These motives are no less than the good or bad condition in which we shall be in, from the time that we die, to all eternity, according as we are among this number, or are not.

The hour is coming, in the which all who
are

are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, that is, they who have strove to gain heaven, unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil, that is, they who have not strove, unto the resurrection of damnation. SERM.
II.

Let us frequently dwell upon this magnificent and awful spectacle; let us represent to our minds the alarming trumpet of the archangel, by which we shall be awakened from our graves, and the summons which we shall receive to stand before the judgement seat of Christ: let us suppose him seated on a lofty throne, surrounded by myriads of angels, and clothed with that splendor and majesty with which he was seen by Peter, James, and John, at his transfiguration, and again by those chosen disciples, who were present at his ascension into heaven: let us think of the grand scene of all the nations of the earth gathered before him, and the tremendous

SERM.

II.

final and everlasting condition of each individual. Let me appeal to your consciences, what hopes do they give you? I address myself to every one of you here present: Has thy conduct been such as to entitle thee to look for that transporting sentence, "Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" Or hast thou not reason to apprehend the sound of these words (of all that can be uttered the most dreadful), "Depart from me thou cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels?" If thou shrinkest with terror at this inquisition; if thou canst not bear thus to have thy conscience probed; if thou buoyest up thyself with some such consolation as this, "though my hopes are nothing now, I intend to repent and live better before I die," alas! how miserably dost thou deceive thyself! Attend to what I tell thee; almost all the wicked, who have gone before thee

thee comforted themselves in the same false **SERM.**
manner, but they never thought the hour of **II.**
reformation arrived; they were still for de-
laying it yet a little while longer, and were
finally cut off with all their imperfections
on their head. What gross folly is this!
How soon does this world pass away, and
how quickly does even the very remembrance
of us perish; whereas to that which is to
come there is no end! Let us think of these
things; let us recollect that the kingdom
of God is not to be got by seeking only; and
when we remember of what infinite import-
ance it is to us not to come short of it, let
us resolve, and let us be steady to our reso-
lutions, to be in the number of those who
strive.

these counted themselves in the same false
 manner; but they never thought the hour of
 reformation arrived; they were still for-
 laying it yet a little while longer, and were
 finally cut off with all their iniquities
 on their heads. What generally is this?
 How soon does this world pass away, and
 how quickly does even the very remembrance
 of us perish; whereas to that which is to
 come there is no end. Let us think of these
 things; let us recollect that the kingdom
 of God is not to be got by seeking only; and
 when we remember of what infinite import-
 ance it is to us not to come short of it, let
 us resolve, and let us be steady to our reso-
 lutions, to be in the number of those who
 survive.

SERMON

SERMON III.

THE DANGERS OF RICHES AND POVERTY.

AGUR'S PRAYER.

PROVERBS xxx. 8, 9.

*Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me
with food convenient for me, lest I be full,
and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?
or lest I be poor and steal and take the
name of my God in vain!*

THIS celebrated prayer of Agur is doubt-
less the dictate of true wisdom: the expe-
rience of all ages has determined that it is
the middle station of life which is most
favourable both to virtue and to happiness,
and consequently, if we had the power of

SERM.
III.

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deciding

these committed themselves in the same false manner, but they never thought the hour of reformation arrived; they were still for delaying it, yet a little while longer, and were finally cut off with all their imperfections on their head. What grievously is this! How soon does this world pass away, and how quickly does even the very remembrance of us perish; whereas to that which is to come there is no end! Let us think of these things; let us recollect that the kingdom of God is not to be got by seeking only; and when we remember of what infinite importance it is to us not to come short of it, let us resolve, and let us be steady to our resolutions, to be in the number of those who strive.

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deciding

SERM. III. deciding for ourselves, it is on this middle state that every prudent man would fix his choice.

But as our conditions are allotted to us by a greater power than we can control, as it is not easy for those in the higher ranks to put off their greatness, and to descend from their elevation; and as it is still more difficult for the lower ranks to ascend, a great part of mankind must necessarily pass their days in one extreme or the other; it may therefore be useful for us to enquire what are the principal temptations to vice, to which each are liable; and what the impediments to happiness, which each throws in our way.

“Give me not riches,” says Agur in his petition to the Almighty, “lest abundance incite me to deny thee, and to say, who is the Lord? Give me not poverty, lest I be driven by want to acts of dishonesty, and to murmurs against thee and thy providence.”

vidence." Agur therefore builds his prayer SERM.
III.
for mediocrity, on the opposite dangers to which riches and poverty are exposed. I will examine into the truth of these dangers, and if I find them really to exist, will endeavour to suggest some considerations and arguments which may serve to counteract them.

And first, it is inferred that riches beget self-sufficiency, a fancied independance, and a denial or forgetfulness of God. The inference receives but too much confirmation from experience. The eminence to which the rich man is exalted above his fellows, the obsequiousness and flattery which greatness procures, and the apparent state of independance, which it creates, are dangerous adversaries to virtue: he who imagines that he feels no immediate want of the divine bounty, or of the assistance of his brethren, is too ready to ascribe his prosperity to his own deserts, is too

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apt to forget, if not to disown his Creator, and to act as if he had no connection at all with his fellow-creature.—“ My own
“ power (will he say in his heart) and the
“ might of mine own hand have gotten me
“ this wealth; I am under no obligations
“ for my grandeur to any one; I think
“ myself therefore entirely unaccountable
“ for my conduct, and shall order it altogether according to my own good pleasure.” “ How hardly (says our Saviour)
“ shall they that have riches enter into the
“ kingdom of God.” He well knew the temptations to which wealth exposed its possessors, and the great resolution which was required to withstand them.

Nor, to speak in general, are riches less prejudicial to happiness than they are to virtue. If there be any such thing as happiness in this world, it must arise from religion, and the exercise of the social affections: he therefore, who is entirely absorbed

sorbed in self (which the wealthy man SERM.
too frequently is) who keeps up no inter- III.
course with his God by prayer and thanks-
giving, and enters into no reciprocation of
kindnesses with his fellow-creatures, must
necessarily be unhappy: two of the chief,
the essential requisites to felicity, are want-
ing, a devout temper and benevolent af-
fections.

Having explained, thus briefly, the dan-
gers of riches, I now proceed to inquire what
are the chief preservatives against them; by
what mode of thinking and acting a rich man
may be both virtuous and happy. Let him
then, in the first place, remember that all
which he possesses was *given* to him; that
his superiority of station implies no superi-
ority of merit, for that worldly prosperity
is dispensed indifferently to the wicked and
the foolish, as well as to the virtuous and the
wise. (When I say that what the rich man
possesses was *given* to him, I express myself

SERM. incautiously ; it was not *given*, it was only
III.

lent, and a strict account will one day take place into the manner in which he has made use of it ; if he has not employed his superfluous wealth to the glory of God, and to the good of men, it will only have served to purchase for him the greater condemnation). Let him recollect also, that though it may be easier for him to procure it, yet, that in fact, he has as much need of the assistance of the poor man, as the poor man has of his : let him call to mind, that they are both composed of the same materials ; subject to the same weaknesses, and infirmities ; and are alike hastening to one common grave : that the distinction between them is but momentary ; and that death will effectually destroy it. Add to this, that the same omnipotent hand which has bestowed riches, can in a moment, by a variety of unforeseen, and apparently impossible ways, withdraw them ; the same power which has raised us to grandeur,

grandeur, can in an instant, when all appears SERM.
III.
outwardly calm and flattering, prostrate us
in the dust. Of the truth of this, the his-
tory of every age presents numerous ex-
amples, nor are our own times deficient: let
us turn our eyes, for a moment, to those
bloody scenes which have lately been acted,
and are still, perhaps, acting in a neighbour-
ing kingdom; how many opulent nobles,
whose situations, not many months ago,
promised as much security as this world can
afford, have suddenly and miserably perish-
ed? I enter not into the question, whether
they have fallen a sacrifice to the justice, or
to the madness of the people; I inquire not
whether their fate was merited; I only con-
tend that they fell *unexpectedly*; that but a
very short time before, they had as much
reason to plume themselves on their opu-
lence, and on its stability, as any other great
man can have; and that they are therefore

SERM. strong instances of the nothingness of riches,
III. and the uncertainty of human grandeur.

But still farther; without depriving us of our lives, without taking from us our possessions, without divesting us of our outward greatness, by the infliction of some painful disease on our bodies, or by the infusion of some corroding anxiety into our minds, God can entirely take from us all enjoyment of the most exalted situation. If considerations of this kind allay the pride and self-sufficiency of the great man; if they keep awake in him the recollection of his dependance, and incite in his mind a grateful sense of his Maker's bounty, and an ardent desire to be serviceable to those of the same nature with himself; and if he act uniformly in consequence, his riches will indeed be blessings; he may then indeed turn them to advantage, and not only enjoy all the happiness which this world is capable of afford-

affording, but will lay up for himself, a never failing source of it, everlasting treasures in that which is to come.

SERM.

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I am now to shew the dangers which are incident to poverty, and to suggest some considerations by which they may be avoided. Give me not poverty, says Agur, lest I should be driven to acts of dishonesty, and be tempted to repine and murmur at the dispensations of Providence; for such, in this place, seems to be the meaning of taking the name of God in vain. In estimating the peculiar and characteristic vices of abundance, and of want; those of the former, as I have before observed, are self-sufficiency and presumption; those of the latter, I am now to shew, are dishonesty and discontent. God forbid, however, that I should mean to say that these vices adhere *universally* to the poor, any more than that those, in all instances, belong to the rich; for if this were the case, it were in vain to ex-

hort

SERM. hort you to guard against them; I only
III. mean that the poor are, from their situation,
peculiarly liable to temptations to them; that
being informed to what attacks they are principally open, they may bend every faculty of their minds to repel them.

It is certain that the life of those in the lowest ranks is subject to many hardships and miseries, from which their more opulent brethren are exempt; they are condemned to be spectators of luxuries, which they can never hope to partake; to submit sometimes to oppressions which they cannot resist; to labour incessantly to procure a scanty pittance, which, in all cases, is barely sufficient, and in some, totally insufficient to maintain themselves and their families; when they ask themselves how they came to be so unfavourably situated, they can give no account of it; from their birth they have been doomed to a life of drudgery, before they could possibly have done any thing to deserve

serve it; some of them are perhaps con- SERM.
scious of possessing virtues and abilities, III.
which might have qualified them to act with
applause in an higher sphere, while they perceive, in many instances, wealth and greatness bestowed on the foolish and wicked. These circumstances, I say, not unnaturally, present temptations to discontent and dishonesty, and too frequently prevail: the lower classes of people are too apt to repine and murmur against Providence, for having placed them amidst so much wretchedness; are too desirous of improving their condition at the expence of their integrity. I would wish then to suggest some arguments, which may operate as preservatives from these two vices. In the first place, they are neither of them likely to be of any service; neither of them calculated to answer the proposed end. With respect to discontent, it always augments the evil with which we are oppressed, be it what it will; it adds to
it

SERM.
III.

it its own bitterness, and takes up in an useless and unavailing manner that time in which we might have learnt to be superior to our afflictions. With respect to dishonesty, it may indeed afford some relief to poverty, but it will be rather in appearance than in effect; at best it will only be temporary. What is gained by fraud, is usually wasted in extravagance; or supposing it applied to furnish with necessaries the family of the person who is guilty of it, the anguish of mind, which the recollection of the manner in which it was procured must create, will more than outweigh the comfort of the relief.

But this is not all; who ever was known to rest contented with the commission of one crime? No,—the bounds of integrity being once broken through, and the labyrinths of knavery entered, it is rarely either in our will, or perhaps even in our power, to retreat. When men have once tasted
the

the wages of iniquity, it is seldom that they will return to honest industry; they usually go forward from crime to crime, till detection takes place, their characters are ruined, they draw down on themselves the vengeance of the laws, and not unfrequently finish their career by an untimely and disgraceful death. And 'twere well if the matter would end here; but a more severe reckoning remains behind! The poor complain, and with some *appearance* of justice, of the wretchedness which they endure on earth; but let them recollect how short their continuance on earth is; that this life is but the beginning of their existence; it is but as a moment, in comparison of the eternity which is to follow, and yet this moment will have an everlasting influence on that eternity. Would they wish to have their sufferings perpetuated with an increase beyond what they can imagine, or would they exchange them (this transi-
tory

SERM.

III.

SERM.

III.

tory state ended) for an eternity of bliss and glory — it depends entirely on themselves. If they are rebellious against their God, which, when they murmur against the dispensations of his providence, they certainly are, if they are dishonest in their commerce with their fellow-creatures, instead of their wretchedness, whatever it may be, concluding with their lives, it will be extended, but with inconceivable additions, through endless ages: whereas, by conducting themselves with patience and integrity, death will soon come to their relief, put a period to their woes, and they will be recompensed for all they have undergone, with transcendant and unfading happiness. If then, ye poor! if ye find the evils of this world, which last so short a time, so hard to sustain, seek, strive to avoid those which are eternal; if ye feel your hearts pant after terrestrial, short-lived happiness, exert every effort to secure that which is celestial

tial and endures for ever! In your thirst after felicity here, ye may be disappointed, but your exertions after that which is to come, cannot but be crowned with success! SERM.
III.

But perhaps the miseries of the poor are not even here so great as they imagine; perhaps there are advantages attached to their situation, which beyond all proportion overbalance them.

Human happiness is in general merely comparative, and it is not so much from the evils which *themselves* feel, that the poor complain of their lot, as from their conceiving that those whom fortune has more highly favoured are more happy.—

But in this comparison they are very often deceived: they see generally only the outside of what belongs to their superiors; the splendour of rank, the glitter of riches, fall alone under their observation; they are apt to think that where these are, all must be calm and happy, and suspect not,

what

SERM. what is really the case, that very frequently
III. under such flattering appearances is concealed an aching heart. Could they follow one of these objects of their envy to his retirement, could they penetrate into the bosom of him whom they suppose to be surrounded by every thing which constitutes felicity, could they view him when all disguise is thrown aside, they would but too often discover how little the gifts of fortune are to be depended on: they would see anguish more extreme than any which they have ever felt, and discover causes of vexation which would amaze them by their number and strangeness. The truth is, that though the great may be exempt from some distresses which the poor feel, they are subject to many others, of which the poor have no idea: as the sphere of their hopes is larger, so is the probability of their disappointments; as they have more to lose, their anxieties and
terrors

terrors are more tormenting; their passions SERM.
rage with greater violence, and they are III.
more harassed by that little, which they
conceive wanting to their felicity, than their
inferiors are from the want of every thing.
Ahab, the wealthy, the potent king of Israel
fell sick for a garden of herbs; and the
Amalekite Haman, who was the favourite of
his prince, and the first subject of a mighty
empire, because an obscure stranger refused
to join with an whole nation in doing him
homage, himself owned, that all which he
possessed availed him nothing.

But supposing that the poor were decid-
edly in this world more miserable than the
rich, and that there really were as much
happiness in grandeur, as there appears out-
wardly, there is yet an inestimable advan-
tage attached to poverty, which would
greatly outweigh any temporary inferiority.

“Blessed,” says our Saviour, “are the poor,

VOL. I.

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“ for

SERM.
III.

“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Before a consideration of this kind all human griefs fade away; the condition of the lowly renders them more likely to embrace the gospel, and to live up to its precepts; the occasions of vice with them are fewer; they have no opportunities of fostering their sensual passions by indulgence, they are quite out of the reach of that heinous and most unchristian vice, pride; they are more peculiarly the objects of God’s care and protection.

Let them then, instead of grieving, rejoice at their lot, when such important privileges are annexed to it, and let them above all things beware how they seek to improve it by a sacrifice of their integrity; let them learn this wholesome lesson from the prayer of Agur, that the two sins, which most easily beset them, are dishonesty and discontent, and let all their efforts be exerted to
repel

repel them ; in other words, let them learn SERM.
III.
and labour truly to get their own living, and
let them run with patience the race that is
set before them.

SERM.

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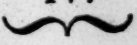
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SERMON IV.

ON THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

PSALM CXXXIX. 2.

*Thou art about my path and about my bed,
and spiest out all my ways.*

AMONG the many reasons which men have SERM.
IV.
to excite them to a life of piety and virtue, 
there is none which, if duly considered,
would have more weight with them than
the omnipresence of God. By the omni-
presence of God I mean that perfection of
his, by which he is immediately present to
every part of the creation, and by conse-
quence

SERM.
IV.

quence intimately acquainted with every thing, which is going forward.

“If we climb up into the heaven,” says the psalmist, “he is there; if we go down “to hell, he is there also. If we take the “wings of the morning, and remain in the “uttermost parts of the sea; even there “also shall his hand lead us, and his right “hand shall hold us.” By which is meant, that we can go to no place, however high or low, where God does not reside; we cannot transport ourselves so swiftly, but that his holy spirit will accompany and sustain us; nothing is so secret, that he does not discover it; “he is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways;” all our thoughts, words, and actions, are laid open and known to him.

It was the advice of a celebrated heathen moralist to his disciples, always to behave and conduct themselves, as if some eminently virtuous person was looking on and observ-

observing them; as, with such an idea, SERM.
IV. they would be ashamed of the commission of any thing which was mean or wicked, and encouraged in the pursuit of whatever was honourable and worthy. Now if the bare imagination and faint persuasion of the observation of a good man were expected to have so much influence, what may not be looked for from the consideration of the actual presence of *God*?—of that Being, before whom the highest orders of arch-angels fall down and worship, whom no man can see, and live!—of that Being, who not only views our actions themselves, but is intimately acquainted with the motives from which they spring!—of that Being, who is holiness itself, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity! Surely if any thing can excite in us awe and reverence, and restrain us from the perpetration of wickedness, it must be an habitual recollection of the presence of our Creator.

SERM.

IV.

When we are in company with any person, who is greatly our superior in rank, or in wisdom, and of whose integrity and gravity we have an high opinion, it has usually a great influence on our behaviour: we stand in awe, and are afraid to sin; we take care at least outwardly to deport ourselves according to the rules of decency and virtue, and are cautious to do nothing which may render us contemptible or disagreeable to him. . Now if the eye of a fallible man has this restraint upon us, how much more should the eye of an all-perfect God! more particularly when we take into consideration, that God is not an unconcerned or helpless spectator of human actions, but highly interested in them, and fully able to reward or punish them. He has strictly forbidden a wicked life, and solemnly sworn that he will severely punish it; his own honour therefore seems to be concerned in the execution of his threats, and we all know

know that his power is absolute and uncontrollable. It often happens that our fellow creature is too indifferent to us to observe or regard our conduct ; or if he does regard it, it is probable he is too weak to recompense it as it deserves : but it is not so with God : he observes minutely, he regards deeply, and to his ability to distribute exact retribution, as I before remarked, there is no limit.

SERM.

IV.

Let the robber, the extortioner, the drunkard, the libertine, the liar, the common swearer, think of this ; their thefts, their frauds, their riots and intemperance, are all seen, their falsities and imprecations are heard, by an observing and avenging God : they may possibly escape the sight of human eyes, they may possibly elude the vigilance of human laws ; but to the omnipresent, all-seeing God, their iniquitous practices must be manifest : nay, he not only sees their actions, but their first thoughts

SERM. thoughts and motions towards them are
IV. discernible by him : one day all will be
laid open to the whole universe ; we ourselves shall be compelled to give evidence against ourselves, minutely perhaps to recount all our follies and vices, and that before a witness and a judge, with whom all dissimulation will be vain.

How mean a triumph is it, which the sinner enjoys, while he plumes himself on having committed some successful wickedness undiscovered, and perhaps unsuspected by his fellow-mortals ! a triumph, which can last but for so very short a time, and which one day will so completely and so publicly be overturned. If there were no superior motive to restrain a man from living one life in secret and another openly, from appearing to his own conscience what he would die with shame to appear to the world, surely the reflection, that his hypocrisy will sooner or later infal-

libly

libly be discovered, should be of itself sufficient! SERM.
IV.

Every thought and action are known to God—and, at the great day of trial, will be exposed before men and angels. How then shall those good men, whom the same integrity which prevented from committing, prevented likewise from suspecting evil, and who, for that reason, have been the dupes of the dissembler's crafty devices, then scorn and detest him!—and how shall those, who have been more openly vicious, scoff and exult in his detection! The mask torn from the brow of the hypocrite, and his fraudulent iniquitous practices laid bare, will afford matter of exultation to the whole universe!

As fear is the strongest and most uncontrollable of all our passions, it seems little less than miraculous that a being so weak as man, who cannot but know that God is a spectator of all his actions, and that he hath denounced the severest threatenings against him,

SERM. thoughts and motions towards them are
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SERM.

IV.

him, if the general tendency of them be vicious, it seems, I say, in the highest degree extraordinary that he should so far be able to cast off this fear as to engage in a wicked course of life; some unaccountable supineness, some fatal inconsideration, conspire to lull him to destruction. But let us awake from this lethargy, let us rouse ourselves from this insensibility into which we are sunk:—"it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Great indeed, and tender are his mercies, but no less severe and terrible are his judgements: if we continue to despise the former, which we certainly do while we are perpetually violating our Creator's laws before his face, how can we entertain the smallest hopes of escaping from the latter?—"He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity."

As

As this universal presence of God ought to have a great force in deterring us from vice, so also should it have no less in exciting us to virtue: it is usually a great encouragement to men to acquit themselves with ability and industry, when they know, that those, whom they love or esteem, are spectators of their actions; but how much greater encouragement should they receive from the reflection that the eyes of God himself are always upon them. Their fellow creatures may deny their approbation for many reasons; sometimes the success of an action is not answerable to its merit, and in that case the judgment of mortals is too frequently guided by the event: sometimes our virtues are not understood, sometimes they are envied, and in all instances, if it be from men that we look for recompence, we generally reap nothing but disappointment. But God regards the principle only; if *that* be good, whether we are successful

SERM.
IV.

SERM. cessful or not, we equally obtain a place
IV. in his favour: he fully understands every
species of merit, and is most pleased where
he finds it most abundant: if we are poor
and weak, he looks to our intentions, and if
those are pious and benevolent, he will not
withhold his applause, because our situation
will not permit us to carry them into
action: the smallest alms given accord-
ing to our abilities, the most hidden cha-
ritable wish fervently put up in private for
our fellow creature attracts his notice, and
secures his approbation; he sees them
in secret, but we may be assured that he
will reward them openly. What an incite-
ment is it to be virtuous, to know that none,
not only of our good actions but even of our
good intentions, shall be lost! that the same
gracious Being is the constant spectator, the
intelligent judge, and will be the liberal re-
warder of them!

Besides this influence on our conduct,
which

which the omnipresence of God should obtain, besides exciting us to what is good, and deterring us from what is evil, it ought also to have an influence on our *temper*, to prevent us from too strongly dreading the approach, or too inordinately lamenting the oppression of any calamity or misfortune. If an all-powerful and all-merciful Being has us constantly under his eye, we may be assured that nothing can happen to us, which is not either good in itself, or capable of being converted into good by our own behaviour under it.

SERM.

IV.

Man is a very short-sighted and feeble creature; he is perpetually subject to evils, which he cannot foresee, or which perhaps, if he could foresee, he could not avoid; he ought to rejoice therefore, that he has a beneficent and powerful friend, the constant superintendant of his concerns, who will never fail to order them for the best, if his
favour

SERM. favour is sought by those easy means, which
IV. himself has appointed.

Let not then the good man be cast down, though apparent calamities do befall him; the patience and fortitude, with which he submits to them, the noble efforts to which they may give rise, the many virtues, for the exercise of which they afford opportunity, have a constant and accurate witness, who is ever at hand to register, and to reward them; who will never suffer those who trust in him, to be oppressed beyond their strength, to be tempted above what they are able to bear; who knows the precise time, when the aid of his holy spirit is most necessary, and will be most efficacious; and when he perceives that from the weakness of humanity we are almost overpowered, he may, either by infusing into us new strength, invigorate and revive our drooping spirits, or he may by some unexpected turn in our concerns do away what oppresses us; or, lastly,

lastly by a timely death he may snatch us **SERM.**
from our sufferings, receive us himself, and **IV.**
recompense us for all we have undergone,
with a far more exceeding and eternal
weight of glory.

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with a few more
recompense for all
from our suffering
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SERMON V.

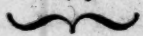
ON SINS OF OMISSION.

ST. MATTHEW XXV. 30.

Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

IN that form of confession, which is with SERM.
great propriety placed at the beginning of ^{V.}
our church service, we not only acknowledge that we have done what we ought not to have done, but that we have left undone what we ought to have done. The guilt of a Christian is made up of omissions as

SERM.

V.


well as transgressions of his duty, and perhaps the former with men in general may have the greater share in drawing on them God's displeasure.—It is certain that this is the case with one very large class, who are commonly distinguished by the name of good sort of people: persons of this description are guilty of no flagrant violations of the laws of God: they are, as far as complying with external forms, religious and devout, they attend regularly at church, they perhaps say their prayers morning and evening, they are neither profane nor debauched, they pay to every one their due; and yet, if this is *all* that can be said for them, they are very far removed from the kingdom of heaven.

The promises of the gospel are not dealt out to negative virtue; Christianity requires from its votaries a continued series of positive acts of goodness. In vain shall we plead that we have done no harm, if we are not entitled

entitled to say that we have done good: we SERM.
V.
were not sent into the world to live in idleness, and to go out of it in the same state in which we entered into it: it is expected from us that we make ourselves better, that we lay out all the endowments of nature and of fortune to the best advantage, that we acquire habits of holiness and benevolence, which may fit us for that blessed society, to which on our so doing we may hope to be preferred.

The dangers which arise to us from omissions of our duty are by so much the greater, because in many cases they are incurred without our being sensible of them, and because in almost all they are not afterwards remembered.

If I commit a positive sin, if I swear, if I am guilty of a falsehood, if I defraud or bear false witness against my neighbour, I know what I am doing at the time,

SERM. ^{v.} my guilt makes an impression on me, my crime assumes a body and a shape, I do not easily forget it, and consequently I may repent of it, and avoid being guilty of the like in future.

But when I am only negatively criminal, when I merely omit to perform either my public or private devotions to the Almighty, or perform them with carelessness and inattention, when I go on from day to day neglecting to improve my understanding, or to render my heart more enlarged, when I take no advantage of the many opportunities, which are presented to me of being useful to my fellow creatures, when I make no progress in the attainment of holiness, and in weaning my affections from the things of this world, my offences, having no immediate tendency to cause inconvenience to myself or do injury to my neighbour, make no lasting impression on my mind; they are

are consequently repeated, not merely without regret, but frequently without notice, and are very soon entirely forgotten.

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V.


Notwithstanding this, they must certainly be accounted for:—what the world frequently calls a good sort of person, that is, one who neither does harm nor good, who is regular and decent in his conduct, and takes care to do nothing that would bring him under the lash of the law, or subject him to any violent censure from his neighbours, whose piety goes no farther than ceremonials, and whose benevolence extends not beyond good wishes; such an one is represented by our Saviour under the character of the servant who hid his talent in a napkin.—This servant neither dissipated what was entrusted to him in extravagance, nor lost it by carelessness, but he neglected to improve it! he did no harm, 'tis true, but he did no good; and therefore the sentence pronounced against him was, “Cast ye the unprofitable

SERM. "servant into outer darkness, where shall
 V.
 "be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The admonitions and threats of the gospel are chiefly directed against people of this class: the denunciations of our Saviour are more frequently pointed at the lamp which had no oil, the tree which bore no fruit, and the talent which was not improved, than at bad oil, corrupt fruits, and talents ill-employed.—On the latter, I suppose, as being more self-evident, it was not so necessary to insist. Flagrant violations of God's commandments speak for themselves; those who are guilty of them cannot but know their criminality, and the dangers which they incur; but it was an instance of our Lord's paternal care to awaken from their slothful dreams, to rouse from their imagined security, those who, resting satisfied with negative virtue, flattered themselves that they might attain heaven and happiness, so long as they did no harm.

Turn

Turn to the 25th chapter of St. Mat- SERM.
thew, and you will see there clearly set forth V.
throughout on what sandy foundations all hopes of God's favour are raised on our merely not being wicked.—It begins with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the former of whom were admitted to the marriage feast, because they had oil in their lamps properly prepared to meet the bridegroom, and the latter excluded because they had no oil. It is not said that their oil was bad, that they were *wicked* virgins, but merely that they had no oil, that they were slothful and improvident, and had been slumbering in indolence during the whole time in which they ought to have been exerting themselves :—" when the door was shut, " these virgins came, saying, Lord, Lord, " open to us, but he answered and said, " Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

The next parable, which immediately follows, is still more in point. I have already touched

SERM. ^{v.} touched on it.—Our Saviour likens himself and his dealings with mankind, to a man, who departing into a distant country, delivered to his servants different sums of money to trade with; on his return summoning them to render up their accounts, he finds two of them had been provident and industrious, having greatly improved what had been intrusted to them, and they accordingly receive his commendations and rewards in proportion to their different merits; but the third having made no advantage of his trust, but merely wrapt it in a napkin, meets with the severest reproofs, and is ordered to be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The conclusion of the chapter is a sort of application of the parable.—It is the remarkable account, which our Saviour gives of the day of judgement.—He represents himself as sitting upon the throne of his glory with

with all his holy angels around him, and **SERM.**
dividing mankind into two bodies, the vir- **V.**
tuous and the wicked, inviting the former
to take possession of their reward, to sit
down with him in his kingdom, and banish-
ing the latter from his presence and doom-
ing them to everlasting fire:—that howe-
ver his justice may be manifest, he briefly
runs over the principal merits and deme-
rits, which will determine him in this dis-
tribution.

To the virtuous he says, “ The rewards,
“ which I bestow on you, are obtained by
your many kindnesses to your brethren;
when they were hungry, ye fed them;
when they were thirsty, ye gave them drink;
when they were naked, ye clothed them;
when they were strangers, ye hospitably re-
ceived them; when they were sick and in
prison, ye were attentive and ministered to
them in their necessities.—From this we
see, that *active benevolence* is the merit,
which

SERM. which is attributed to those, whom our Sa-
 V. viour receives into his kingdom.—It was
 not because they did not injure their fellow-
 creatures, but because they *exerted* them-
 selves to be of service to them, that they
 are rewarded with bliss and immortality.

On the other hand, the wicked are con-
 demned to everlasting torments for the
 omission of those very acts of benevolence,
 for having done which the righteous are re-
 warded with eternal happiness: they are
 not in the sentence passed on them charged
 with having killed, defrauded, or in any
 shape oppressed their brethren, but merely
 with having done them no services.—This
 alone is looked upon as sufficient to exclude
 them from the presence of God, and de-
 prive them of the enjoyments of heaven.

Nor indeed could we in reason expect it to
 be otherwise. No human accomplishment,
 no human possession (to speak in gene-
 ral) is attained without pains and labour;
 sitting

sitting still in indolence, and merely doing SERM.
V.
nothing to *counteract* their attainment, is not sufficient; we must be assiduously attentive and actively industrious, if we would wish to succeed.—Surely then we cannot imagine that immortality of bliss, bliss such as we can here have no conception of, is to be procured without any efforts, when it requires the greatest to attain even the paltry acquisitions of this world.

I shall conclude with beseeching you, that none of you, because ye think ye can do but little, will for that reason imagine, that it is unnecessary to do any thing.—Ye read that of those, to whom much is given, much will be required; but can ye suppose that of him, to whom little is given, there will be required nothing? Far from it.—Expectations are formed of us in proportion to our endowments.—He, who had only two talents, was not expected to gain five;—you find his reward was allotted him for
gaining

SERM. ^{V.} gaining two, that is, for doing what his abilities permitted him.—In the same manner he, who had only one talent, was not expected to gain as much as his fellow servants, who had more; nor was he punished for not having done as much as they; but he was punished for having done nothing, for having made no advantage at all of what was intrusted to him.

Let this truth then be deeply engraven on your remembrance, that all men have it in their power to do something for the glory of God, and for the good of their fellow-creatures; and that it is not by the doing no harm, by sitting still in indolence, and fancying that we can do nothing, but by an active exertion of our respective abilities, that we can alone deserve and obtain that transporting sentence, “Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

SERMON

On the Propriety of
SERM. VI.
SERMON VI.

ON THE IMPROPRIETY OF DESERTING
WORDLY DUTIES.

PREACHED IN LENT.

ST. MATTHEW xxiii. 23.

*These ought ye to have done, and not to
leave the other undone.*

It has been the great aim of infidelity in
all ages to persuade the credulous and un-
wary, that religion and present interest are
incompatible; that we cannot at the same
time apply ourselves to our callings here
and secure our happiness hereafter, but that
we

SERM.
VI.

SERM.

VI.

we must of necessity sacrifice either this world or the next. Those who have been deceived by this misrepresentation have, according to their different tempers, chosen two opposite modes of conduct, both very far, though perhaps not equally distant, from that which sound reason points out.

They, on whose minds the goodness of God in their creation and redemption, and the immensity of the rewards and punishments held forth in futurity obtained that weight, which in wisdom they ought to obtain, have given up all commerce with this world whatever, have betaken themselves entirely to the exercises of piety, have fled to deserts and to cells, and in the ardour of performing their duty towards God, have entirely neglected that, which is due from them to their neighbour.

They on the contrary, whose warmer passions, or whose less enlarged understanding chained them down to what was immediately

diately before them, who preferred what SERM.
VI.
was present and visible, to what was invisible and distant, have thought it the most agreeable, if not the most wise, to listen to the solicitations of their senses, and to seize the gratifications which were at hand; they have conducted themselves as if there were no God, no account taken of human actions, no judgment after death, no heaven, no hell, but that this present life was the whole of their existence.

Both these descriptions of men have, I observed, proceeded on a persuasion that their temporal and eternal interests were at variance; that the one or the other must of necessity be surrendered, and that there was no middle course by which they were reconcilable.

I shall in this discourse endeavour to point out the falsity and pernicious tendency of this error; I shall point out its falsity by shewing that a man may work out his

S E R M.

VI.

salvation at the same time that he attends to his earthly concerns; and I shall expose its pernicious tendency, by proving, that to withdraw ourselves entirely from worldly business is not unnecessary, but criminal; that religion does not only not command such a desertion, but actually forbids it.

First, then, I am to shew that a man may work out his salvation at the same time that he attends to his earthly concerns.

Those who maintain the contrary, ground probably their opinion on the following precepts of our Saviour, and other of the like import; "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." Here, say they, our Saviour seems to forbid all care, even about the necessities of life, meat, drink, and clothing; much more about the conveniencies and delights of it. In the same chapter, he says, "Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither

“neither do they reap, nor gather into SERM.
“barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth VI.
“them;” and again, “Consider the lilies
“of the field how they grow, they toil not
“neither do they spin.” Here it seems to
be intimated that we ought to depend on
the providence of God for food and raiment,
and to use no more industry for obtain-
ing them than the fowls or the lilies do.
There are various other texts of this kind,
all of which there are two ways of explain-
ing, and either is sufficient to overturn the
conclusion drawn from them, that worldly
employments and religion are incompati-
ble. One explanation is, that our Saviour
does not mean to condemn all care what-
ever about the things of this life, but only
that sort of care which is accompanied with
anxiety and distrust; that he does not in-
tend to decry every kind of diligence and
industry with regard to our earthly con-
cerns, but only such degrees of them as

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would take off, or too much withdraw, our attention from the duties of religion. The other explanation, which is most probably the true one, is, that these commands were not designed to be general and standing laws, but were only addressed to, and intended for the practice of the first disciples; for it was necessary that they should always be attendant on our Saviour to be witnesses of his miracles, and hearers of his doctrines; and in those in particular who were to preach the gospel after his resurrection, a peculiar degree of contempt of the world, and disinterestedness, was requisite; since they must of course quit their homes, give up what prospects they had of advancing their fortunes, and expose themselves to persecutions and deaths of every kind.

An entire freedom from care and concern with regard to temporal comforts was absolutely requisite in these; but that it is not so in all men, is very evident from various passages

passages in the gospel. When the forerunner of our Saviour, John the Baptist, was asked by the publicans and soldiers what they should do, what conduct he would prescribe to them to fit them for the coming of the Messiah; to the former he says, "Exact no more, than that which is appointed you;" to the latter, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." No mention, you see, of relinquishing their professions, which there certainly would have been had it been necessary; for John was sent for the express purpose of preparing the way for the preaching of the gospel. Nor is the counsel of Christ himself on a similar occasion different: on his being asked by a certain lawyer what he should do to inherit eternal life? he replies unto him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And the lawyer answering, said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

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“heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself:” And Jesus said unto him, “thou hast answered right, this do, and thou shalt live.” No injunction, you see, to forsake the world, or to give up his business; nor is such meaning fairly to be drawn from any other of our Lord’s discourses.

His advice to the rich young man to sell all that he had, and to give to the poor, is certainly much overstrained by those who would suppose it binding on Christians in general; it was probably meant as a trial of the sincerity of the person to whom it was addressed, and certainly extends not beyond them to whom our Lord may have directly enjoined it. It seems to be intimated, indeed, though even this has been otherwise explained, that many of the first converts to Christianity parted with all that they had, laid the money at the apostles’ feet, and lived together

together on a common stock; but it is probable that they still continued to employ themselves in their several trades and professions. Nor was there any obligation upon them to this communion of goods, as St. Peter expressly asserts in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; nay, among those, who were first called, there are several instances to the contrary, instances of opulent persons and in high civil and military employments, who neither divested themselves of their riches, nor forsook their occupations. They are charged indeed, to be ready to give, and willing to communicate, which they doubtless were; but neither did they look on themselves as bound, nor did the apostles require of them, when they adopted the character of Christians, to desert their duty as men. Christianity with respect to the civil relations of men to each other, and their secular employments, seems to have left the world entirely as she found it;

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SERM. she insists indeed on a faithful discharge of
VI. the duties of our station, whatever it may
be, but nowhere commands that the station
itself should be deserted: the prince is not
enjoined to descend from his throne, nor the
subject to throw off his allegiance; the
master is not required to dismiss his ser-
vant, nor the servant to forsake his mas-
ter, neither is there any precept to the man
of business to relinquish his occupation.

Christianity inculcates no virtue, which
may not be practised in the most eminent
degree amidst society and worldly employ-
ment; while there are Christian duties
which in retirement and seclusion can
scarce be practised at all, or at best but
imperfectly.

And this brings me to what I proposed
in the second place, to shew the pernicious
tendency of the notion that religion and
worldly occupation are irreconcilable.—
There needs no proof of its destructive ef-
fect

fect upon those who are driven by it to give themselves up entirely to this present life, and to throw off all thoughts about the next; but I will take the instance of those who make choice of the most favourable side of the alternative, and in their desire to attain the things above, altogether renounce the things on earth. I assert then, that such a renunciation, so far from being necessary, is criminal, and that religion does not only not command, but actually disapproves it. At the head of the Christian graces stands benevolence; to do all the good we possibly can to our fellow-creatures, is our bounden and indispensable duty; now he who secludes himself from the world, can observe this but very imperfectly: taking no measures to advance his fortune, his bounties to the indigent will be narrowed and confined; not improving his interest, he will be the less able to countenance merit or succour distress; and in
vain

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SERM. vain do his friends have recourse to *him* for
 VI. advice, whom solitude has prevented from
 the acquisition of experience.

I do not say that he will be unable or unwilling to exercise those duties at all, but certainly in no comparable degree to what he might have done, if idleness or superstition had not driven him to seclusion. The case of that servant who wrapped his talent in a napkin, and applied himself to no means of improving it, is precisely the same with his who withdraws from all the duties of active life; and it behoves us to remember the sentence that his lord passes upon him, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The world is the noblest theatre of action; it is there only that our talents can be applied to the greatest advantage, and our virtues exercised with the most diffusive utility. It is not meant by this, that
 he

he who finds himself placed in a private situation should endeavour to exchange it for one which is more public; by no means! it is only meant that whatever a man's rank and station in life may be, he ought not to desert the duties of it; nor think to atone by piety towards his Creator, for the neglect of doing all possible good to his fellow creatures. SERM.
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To keep ourselves unspotted from sin, is one motive of retiring from society, but it has not in general been found that the experiment has succeeded. We may quit the business of the world, without divesting ourselves of its vices; the exercises of piety cannot fill up our whole time, and the dangers of idleness are great! From some temptations to sin perhaps solitude may exempt us, but at the same time it excludes us from many encouragements to virtue: if we escape the contagion of bad,

we

SERM. we miss likewise the influence of good ex-
VI. ample.

Besides, one who fancies himself out of the reach of danger, as the retired man is apt to do, gives himself up to security; and too frequently loses his integrity, from being unapprehensive of an attack; while the vigilance of him who lives surrounded by temptation, is quickened by a sense of his peril; he sees the enemy always at hand, and therefore is always prepared to withstand him. Upon the whole then I conclude, that worldly employment and true religion may easily subsist together, and not only so, but that a life of activity and business is more favourable to virtue, and perhaps less liable to vice, than a life of solitude and seclusion. We must however take care that worldly hopes and fears do not gain the ascendancy in our minds; we may pursue with diligence, and enjoy with moderation, the happiness which this world can

can bestow, where it does not interfere with our spiritual concerns ; but where it does, it must without a moment's hesitation give place. Earthly occupations may engage, but they must not engross, our thoughts ; they may have a share in our hearts, but let us not forget that our well-being through eternity demands that it should be a subordinate share only. There are likewise times when temporary retirement from the world will be extremely salutary, that we may review our past lives, and form resolutions for our future conduct ; and the present approaching season of the sufferings and death of our blessed Saviour, which Christians of all ages seem to have dedicated to such purposes, appears to be peculiarly proper ; but as much may be said on this subject, I shall reserve it for a future discourse.

an honest heart it does not interfere with
 our spiritual concerns; but where it does
 it must without a moment's hesitation give
 place to the more important and engaged
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 and a serious thing. There are likewise
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 ings and death of our blessed Saviour,
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 dedicated to such purposes, appears to be
 peculiarly proper; but as much may be
 said on this subject, I shall reserve it for
 future discourse.

SERMON VII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF TEMPORARY RETIRE-
MENT AND ABSTRACTION.

PREACHED IN LENT.

PSALM iv. 4.

*Commune with your own heart, and in your
chamber, and be still.*

IN a late discourse I endeavoured to shew SERM.
VII.
the falsity and hurtful tendency of the no-
tion, that religion and worldly business
could not subsist together. I described to
you the pernicious effects which this notion
had on those who gave credit to it; that it
had driven some to give themselves up en-
tirely

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had induced others altogether to forsake them ; that the former had lived as if they were totally unconnected with God ; the latter, as if they had nothing at all to do with mankind. The conduct of both of these, I observed, was far different from what sound reason pointed out ; that the man who gave himself up to this world without any idea of another, certainly drew on himself everlasting punishment in the life to come, whilst he who, in the ardour of piety, was entirely unmindful of what he owed to his fellow creatures, debarred himself from exercising any Christian virtues at all, and could practise others but very imperfectly.

I concluded, on the whole, that a due attention to our earthly concerns, and the attainment of the kingdom of heaven, were very reconcileable, and that perfection of character consisted in a diligent discharge
of

of our various duties, as men, no less than SERM.
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as Christians. I cautioned you, however, against permitting worldly affairs to gain the ascendancy in your hearts; I told you that they might engage, but not engross, your affections; and that whenever you found your temporal and eternal interest at variance, the former must, without a moment's hesitation, give place to the latter. I added likewise, that in censuring a desertion of the duties of this world, I was not to be understood as speaking of a temporary retirement from it; that there were times when this was not only salutary, but absolutely requisite; that the approaching season of the sufferings and death of our Redeemer had been particularly dedicated by the primitive Christians to such purposes, and therefore was peculiarly proper; and it was on this subject of temporary retirement that I engaged to speak more at large.

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I propose, on the present occasion, to fulfil this promise by pointing out the employment which should engage us in our retirements, and the advantages which may be expected to arise from them.

But here I must premise, that though retirement be necessary for all men in some degree, the length of it must be determined in a great measure by a man's situation in life: some may dedicate weeks, some days, and some perhaps only hours to it; but all may spend some portion of their time in solitude and consideration, and some gain will accrue even from the least time thus spent.

The employment, then, of our retirement should be, meditation on our condition as created, accountable beings, on our past life, and on our future prospects; reflection on the manner in which we have discharged our duty towards God, and our neighbour, with the hope which our behaviour

viour may promise us of the approbation SERM.
of our Maker, and eternal happiness after VII.
death.

Let not those who already know how to conduct this self-examination be wearied, while I point out to them, who are not so well instructed, some few questions to put to themselves: it is my duty to attend to the necessities of all.

When, then, you have retired for the salutary purpose of self-examination, let your thoughts and enquiries be of this kind:

I find myself placed in a busy world, to which my wants and desires are continually drawing my attention; its cares or its pleasures require so much of my time, that perhaps I have scarcely yet found leisure to ask myself how long I am likely to continue in the same state, and what is to become of me when I go into another. Let me then ask it now, and ask it seriously, Am I to continue here for ever? and if

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not,

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not, what is to be my condition when I go from hence? With respect to the first question, both experience and scripture will tell me, "that man that is born of a woman has but a short time to live," that three score or four score years at most are the days of his pilgrimage, but that he may, and probably will, be cut off much sooner: let me think how many of those who set out with me in life are already silent in the grave, and let me not presume on the continuance of that breath, of which the next moment may deprive me, which when I recollect how many of my companions have gone before me, it is a subject of wonder that I have enjoyed so long. This life, then, I cannot but allow is uncertain; it may be put an end to immediately, and at all events will not be very lasting. What then follows? Shall that stroke, which reduces my body to the dust whence it originally sprung, put an entire period

period to my existence? Must I bid an SERM.
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eternal adieu to that being and those fa-
culties which I received from my Maker?

Have I been so far raised above the beasts of the field in life, only to be levelled with them in death? Both reason and the Bible join to assure me, that this will not be the case; that in leaving this world, I only change, do not part from, my existence; and though after my flesh, worms may destroy my body, yet that it will be raised again at a certain time, and re-united to my soul, and I shall live. But what then, shall I be happy, or shall I be miserable? This, the scriptures tell me, depends altogether on myself; my behaviour now, while I am in this world, will determine it; if that be conducted according to the will of my Maker, I shall be beyond my utmost conception happy; but if on the contrary, I am wicked and rebellious to his laws, I shall be in an equal degree miser-

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able; and what adds to this, and makes it tremendously important, is, that my state in the world to come will not be brought to an end, as it is here, but such as it shall be at first, so will it remain for ever and ever.

Having thought seriously on this subject, and brought it thoroughly home to you, you will each of you naturally proceed to ask yourself, To which of these states do my actions entitle me? Have they been such as to give me sufficient cause to flatter myself with the hope of obtaining the rewards of my Creator, or have they been such, that my conscience tells me I can look for nothing but his vengeance? In the first place, how have I behaved myself with respect to him? have I frequently thought with gratitude of his having first created, and since preserved me; of his having sent his only begotten Son to teach me what I ought to do to please him, and to

to gain everlasting life, and of that same SERM.
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Son having submitted to a most painful and ignominious death to atone for my imperfect obedience, and to save me from the consequences of my sins? Have I given him repeated thanks for these instances of his goodness, both in public and private? Have I not suffered myself to be deterred from these duties by idle and feigned excuses; or if I have been regular and constant in the performance of them, have I been attentive, serious, and hearty? Have I besides prayed to God, for the pardon of my faults, and the supply of my wants? have I had a zeal for his honour? do I never take his holy name in vain? never brave and affront him by lies and equivocations? and do I both by advice and example endeavour to promote the practice of piety and virtue, and to discourage that of wickedness and irreligion? As to my fellow creatures, how has been my conduct

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with regard to them? Have I, as our Saviour commands, done unto them, as I would wish them to do unto me? Have I been true and just in all my dealings? Have I been as careful not to defraud others; as to prevent myself from being defrauded? Have I not availed myself of superior wealth to oppress those beneath me in station, or superior cunning to over-reach those beneath me in worldly wisdom? If I am a father, am I careful that my children are virtuously educated, and as well as my situation will admit? If I am a son, am I dutiful and affectionate to my parents? As a master of a family, do I set my dependants a good example, and am I as gentle and considerate as our common relationship to each other demands? as a servant, am I faithful, obedient, and respectful? If I am in good circumstances, am I compassionate and charitable to my poor brethren? If I am indigent, am I humble and lowly to my superiors,

periors, receiving their bounty with gratitude, and not envying or repining at their seemingly greater happiness. The time would fail me if I were to go over all the different questions comprized in self-examination, which it is our duty to put to ourselves in our hours of retirement: conscience will suggest the greater part of them, and the frequent reading of the holy scriptures will very much assist you, for in them are enumerated all our virtues and vices, and there you will find precisely marked out both what God commands, and what he forbids. Let me then press upon you a diligent and frequent perusal of this good book, and more particularly of the four gospels contained in the New Testament. Each of those, you know, is a short life of our Saviour, written by different persons, and most parts of them so plainly written, that none can misunderstand them: there you will find both what our Saviour did,
and

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and what he taught; and from comparing his example and his instructions with your own practice, you will easily discover what manner of men ye are; how far ye have deviated from the great standard of perfection, or how closely you have adhered to it—in a word, what are your hopes of attaining heaven, or what reason you have to apprehend an eternity of shame and punishment.

They who can in a satisfactory manner go through this important trial, whose own hearts, on an impartial and honest scrutiny, bid them confidently rely on their innocence, from the infinite pleasure which self-examination will give them, need little persuasion frequently to have recourse to it: while they on the other hand, who never look into themselves but with shame, anguish, and terror, are too likely to avoid every step which may lead to it, are too likely to fly from solitude and reflection,
and

and drown the remonstrances of conscience in noise, hurry, and dissipation.

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But alas! what do they gain by this? a little present ease dearly bought with lasting woe; a moment's respite from the anticipation of misery, purchased with the actual endurance of it to all eternity. By thus flying the inspection of their hearts, and the consideration of their ways, they shut up every avenue to reformation, they effectually and voluntarily close against themselves the gate of everlasting life.

It is strange that men should be so inattentive and negligent of their eternal happiness, when in general they are so extremely provident and careful of their temporal interest.

To promote the latter they will rise up early, and late take rest and eat the bread of carefulness; no toils are thought too hard to undergo, no dangers too formidable to brave with a prospect of its advancement,

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ment, while to the former they frequently refuse the equitable chance of even a few hours consideration. For surely if after death there be a state which is to last for ever; and if our condition in that state will depend entirely on our conduct now, nothing but consideration can be wanting to rational creatures, to induce them to pursue that which may render them as happy as possible. Consideration may indeed at first be the cause of great anguish and horror to the guilty person; and this may tempt and unfortunately prevail on him to endeavour to drive it from him, yet let him recollect, that though he may postpone, he cannot finally escape it. Calamity, sickness, or approaching dissolution, will force it upon him, and with pangs proportionably increased from their having been so long kept off; and alas! consideration will then too probably do him little good.

When

When we have cunningly contrived to rob God of the service of the best part of our lives, have anxiously laboured to expel all thoughts of him from our minds, can we expect that he will take up with a few unprofitable sighs and prayers, which terror alone has drawn from us, and which we are no longer able to avoid. “Long have ye set at nought (may he say) my counsel, and hearkened not to my reproof: therefore I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then ye shall call upon me, but I will not answer; ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me: for ye hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord!” — Oh then let us be wise in time, and consider these things *now* to our eternal

SERM. eternal peace and comfort; let us think of
VII. them while we may redress them; while
 we have it yet in our power let us make
 haste to enter into the paths of the Lord!

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

THE EFFICACY OF REPENTANCE.

St. LUKE XV. 7.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

OF all the discoveries which we derive SERM.
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from the scriptures, there is none which
is capable of affording us greater comfort
and satisfaction, than the assurance which
they give us of forgiveness of sins on re-
pentance. It is not to be denied that the
system

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system of morality laid down in the gospel is very difficult to be observed : our nature is frail, our passions are violent, and the temptations with which we are surrounded very alluring ; so that notwithstanding all our care and all our firmness, the best of us are frequently drawn aside from our duty : an unsinning obedience is what none of us arrive at ; “ the flesh constantly lusteth against the spirit ;” in many things we offend all, and yet there is no precept more constantly insisted on by Christ and his apostles than “ be ye perfect.” Into what a state then of despondence should we be thrown, if we believed that every sin was unpardonable ! acquainted as we are with our duty, conscious as we must be of our frequent deviations from it, and knowing the wrath and terrors of the Lord revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, how wide would be the reign of despair, if God Almighty, out of his great goodness, had

had not solemnly engaged to forgive our transgressions on our sorrow and amendment; if we had reason to believe that the governor of the universe was inexorable, that once offended, he would never be appeased, there would be nothing left to stop us in the career of vice: all hope being banished, there would be no room for endeavour; the progress of life would be the natural descent of negligent despair from crime to crime; our first wish would be to withdraw our thoughts from our Creator, and our first happiness to stifle all reflection whatever. But far otherwise is the case: not only he who is surprized by ignorance, by negligence, or by passion, into the commission of accidental guilt, but even the more hardened sinner may be sure of meeting with favour, if he will but once embrace the means which are appointed for the obtaining it; the road to mercy and salvation is accessible to all,

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however profligate and abandoned we may have been, if we are sincerely afflicted at the remembrance of our wickedness, firmly resolve to forsake it, and prove our sincerity by the immediate amendment of our lives; "though our sins were as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

What a great proof is this of the infinite goodness of the Almighty, what a consolation to those who are oppressed by the consciousness of their iniquities, what an argument to persuade them to repent and reform, when by so doing, all in which they have offended shall be blotted out, and no more remembered against them. It would be no small encouragement to the sinner, in his advances towards virtue, if he only believed that by forsaking his evil ways, he should escape the condemnation which is denounced against those who are impenitently wicked; but the mercy which

is

is offered him is much superior to this: SERM.
he is assured, that if with sincerity and VIII.
earnestness he laments and avoids his
former transgressions, and doeth that which
is lawful and right, he shall not only re-
scue himself from perdition, but will have
a claim, and perhaps an equal claim, to
those rewards which his bounteous Creator
has prepared for them who love him.

Among the Jewish teachers there were
some very forcible sayings as to the power
and efficacy of repentance: "Great is the
" dignity of penitents, great is the virtue
" of them that repent, so that no creature
" may stand in their rank and order;"
and again, "the righteous may not stand
" in the same place with those who re-
" pent." These are high sayings, and must
certainly be understood with allowance, and
yet they seem countenanced in a degree
by some passages in scripture. In the
chapter of St. Luke, from which I took

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my text, are three remarkable parables: they were spoken by our Saviour on his being reproached by the scribes and pharisees for his consorting with publicans and sinners. The first and second are exactly of the same nature, the third is the much celebrated one of the prodigal son; the design of them all is to set forth the value of repentance. The first of them runs thus: "What man of you, having
" an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them,
" doth not leave the ninety and nine in the
" wilderness, and go after that which is
" lost, until he find it. And when he hath
" found it, he layeth it on his shoulders
" rejoicing. And when he cometh home,
" he calleth together his friends and neigh-
" bours, saying unto them, Rejoice with
" me, for I have found my sheep which
" was lost." What is our Lord's applica-
" tion? "I say unto you, that likewise
" joy shall be in heaven over one sinner
" that

“that repenteth, more than over ninety
“and nine just persons that need no re-
“pentance.”

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Nothing can possibly set the dignity of repentance higher: the Almighty himself perhaps, and certainly the heavenly host, are represented as receiving an increase of happiness from the reformation of a sinner; nay, it is mentioned as giving them higher satisfaction than the continuance of ninety and nine persons in a state of uninterrupted righteousness.—

How are we to account for this? Is there not something in it very strange, and almost contradictory? What! is it not better to have been engaged in such a course of action as to preclude the necessity of a change; to have done nothing which requires sorrow, so to have lived as to have no need of repentance? Is not prevention better than remedy; or are we to sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! The great hazard of our being so ena-

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moured of our vices as never to be willing to forsake them, or of our being cut off in the midst of them, and so prevented from being able, is alone sufficient to deter a rational being from acting on this conclusion.

But yet repentance appears to be preferred before constant righteousness.

If this really be the meaning of this passage, it perhaps may be accounted for in the following manner :

By the ninety and nine just persons mentioned in the text, we are not to understand persons absolutely and unexceptionably virtuous, but persons who possess that degree of limited virtue, which falls to the share of fallible men; persons, who have their imperfections and frailties, but who yet live so in the main as to be under no necessity of altering the whole course of their lives, and so may be said to need no repentance. Now to these the sincere penitent may possibly be superior; he may,

I say,

I say, for it becomes us to speak with diffidence: for first, if the value of virtue be in proportion to the difficulty of practising it, it is certainly much more difficult to stop in the career of vice, and to turn to what is lawful and right, than to persevere in the same good course, in which we have been always engaged. The single effort, by which we recover ourselves from the downhill road to perdition, requires a greater share of resolution than an hundred acts of habitual virtue. Add to this, that penitents are usually much more zealous in the practice of religion, much more strict in their integrity, than those who have never grossly offended: their trouble and remorse for their sins spur them on in the ways of goodness and piety, and a lively sense of their past errors makes them more fearful of displeasing God, and very anxiously desirous to atone for their former deficiency by superior present exactness.



SERM. Their affection to their Maker is usually  
VIII. more vehement, and burns with a brighter flame; they have not only the same causes with others to adore and to love him, but this additional one, that he most kindly gave them time and inclination to see the folly and danger of their evil ways; that he did not cut them off in their sins, but by the suggestions of his holy spirit has brought them within view of heaven and happiness. "To whomsoever much is forgiven, the same will love much." Penitents likewise are in general more eager for the conversion of others, from a deep sense of what was once the danger of their own state; they have also less pride, from the recollection of what themselves formerly were, and are more compassionate and charitable to the vices and follies of their neighbour.

So that sinners do certainly very often, when they have once repented, arrive at a  
greater

greater degree of perfection, than those, SERM.  
who have been always trained and accus- VIII.  
tomed to a good life.

If however it should still be thought, that \* the highest mansions in heaven will be reserved for those who have never departed either very long, or very far from their obedience, still it must be allowed that the efficacy of repentance is very great: it gives joy to the inhabitants of heaven, redeems the penitent from destruction, and entitles him, if not to the very highest, yet certainly to a distinguished situation in the kingdom of God.

I shall conclude this discourse by tracing out the usual progress of repentance, and the marks by which it may be discerned, whether it be a repentance unto salvation. The first and main step in this rugged road, is, consideration; and that, once properly

\* See Dr. Powell, towards the conclusion of his Sermon on the Prodigal Son.

used,

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used, all the rest follows of course. For surely it is impossible for the sinner to reflect seriously on his degraded and perilous situation, of the ingratitude which he has committed against God, who has laid all possible obligations upon him, of the folly which he hath been guilty of towards himself in forfeiting his title to eternal bliss and glory, and of the danger to which he has subjected himself of everlasting perdition; that there is but one step between him and death, and not another between that and hell, surely it is impossible for him to lay these thoughts seriously to heart, without being deeply concerned that he has acted so absurdly and criminally, or without wishing most devoutly that he had done otherwise. Hence arises sorrow for his sins past, which is the main ingredient in repentance; for a desire and resolution to avoid the like vicious courses in future naturally and usually follow. So far re-  
pentance



penitance is produced by fear ; but now a nobler motive will begin to operate. Our evil ways being relinquished, the transition is easy, and almost unavoidable, to a life of piety and virtue ; and that once begun, the hope of pleasing our Maker and attaining the glorious rewards, which he hath promised, will soon predominate. The dread of punishment may deter us from relapsing into gross wickedness, but it must be the desire of gaining the approbation of our Creator, and becoming partakers of his heavenly promises, which can alone excite us to any sublime height of virtue. Repentance, we see, begins with consideration, from whence results sorrow for sins past ; this sorrow produces a resolution to avoid the like in future, which is the beginning of reformation ; and that once entered upon, and the prospects of eternal bliss, and glory opening upon us and animating our exertions, there is no degree of perfection at which

SERM.  
VIII.

**SERM.**  
**VIII.**  


which we may not arrive, and probably no mansions in heaven which we may not attain. A true penitent then is one, who is thoroughly convinced of the folly, baseness, and ingratitude of sin; who has forsaken it, from the danger to which it exposed him, and who has embraced a life of holiness, from the hopes of pleasing his Maker, and attaining his gracious promises. He never looks back to his past life without shame and self-abhorrence, and is particularly cautious not to call to mind his former vicious pleasures, except to quicken his sorrow and contrition, and to beg mercy of God for having been guilty of them. Reflecting on the injury which he may have done by his former bad example, he is desirous that his conversion may be open and manifest, and that he may become an eminent pattern of what is just and worthy; as he was formerly the cause of reflections on his profession of a Christian, he will be careful

ful that those who were once scandalized by his vices, may now be edified by his virtues; he will make his light shine before men, that they may see his good works and glorify, on his account, his Father which is in heaven. If he has wronged any one, he will be rigorously exact in making restitution; for it is impossible he should be in earnest in his reformation, if he continues to enjoy or retain the acquisitions of sin. SERM.  
VIII.

Lastly, he will scrupulously avoid those companions and those situations, by which he knows himself liable to be drawn into vice; a relapse may otherwise be the consequence, and his rashness in hazarding it may provoke God entirely to withdraw from him his holy spirit, and so his last state may be worse than his first. Let not however the penitent be discouraged by unpremeditated and unintentional lapses, at his first entrance into repentance; let him not provoke them, but let him not despair,  
if



**SERM.  
VIII.**

if he should occasionally fall into them. It requires uncommon firmness, and it is indeed almost impossible to arrive at once, after a long course of sinning, at perfect obedience. But let him persevere in his exertions, and he will rise superior to his falls; he will grow by degrees more and more firm, will be continually making new accessions in holiness, till at length he is freed from this life of probation by death, and will attain that state where there is assurance of righteousness and happiness for evermore.

he knows himself liable to be overcome by the same temptation, and his rashness in hasting it may provoke God continually to withdraw from him his holy spirit, and so his last state may be worse than his first. Let not however the penitent be discouraged by unpremeditated and unintentional lapses, at his first entrance into repentance; let him repent, but let him not despair.

**SERMON**

## SERMON IX.

### ON CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever state I am,  
therewith to be content.*

IN all situations of life, discontent is very  
unreasonable; happiness is dealt out to  
mankind with an equal hand; and though  
the high and the low, the rich and the poor,  
the old and the young, are subject each of  
them to particular evils, from which they  
see others perhaps exempt, yet, if they  
would

SERM.  
IX.

SERM. would view the matter impartially, they  
IX. would perceive that they are made amends  
for these evils by particular advantages  
which others do not enjoy. Discontent is,  
notwithstanding, very universal, and the  
poor in particular, by which I mean the  
labouring part of mankind, are apt to think  
that *they* complain with the greatest reason,  
and their murmurs, if not the deepest,  
are at least the loudest, and the most  
known.

Of these there are some who are so absurd as to think it unjust that there should be any such thing as inequality among mankind; there are others who see the impossibility of all being equal, yet think it an hardship that it should fall to their lot to be at the bottom of the scale; while a third set look on the evils of poverty as so intolerable, that they would be willing to hazard a general confusion of their country for the hopes of improving their condition.

I hope



I hope, in this discourse, to shew the folly SERM.  
and injustice of these ways of thinking, by IX.  
proving, 

First, that it is a thing impossible that inequality of rank and riches should not prevail, and that this being the case it is no more an hardship on one man to be low and poor than it would have been upon another.

Secondly, that the poor are free from many evils which the rich suffer, and enjoy many comforts which the rich want;—so that there is the greatest reason to believe that their state is as happy, on the whole.

Thirdly, that supposing any violent convulsion of the state was to bring about a change of conditions, many would be made miserable by it, and none would be made happy.

First, I am to prove that it is a thing impossible that inequality of rank and riches should not prevail.

It is clearly a great argument in favour

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— of

SERM.

IX.

of this assertion, that we know to a certainty that in all ages of the world there ever has been this inequality. Read the Bible; from the very earliest times, at least after the flood, and you will meet with the mention of kings and princes and masters, and of subjects, servants and slaves:—you may remember the names of Nimrod, Melchisedec, Abimelec, Pharoah; all of them kings, or men of great rank and power:—you may remember also, that Abraham and Lott, Isaac and Esau, Jacob and Laban, had each of them his herdsmen and his servants: there is then a great presumption that what always has been is in the course of nature, and that it could not be ordered otherwise.

But I think, without having recourse to what always has been, the assertion may be proved to you from common sense and reason. For supposing this equality, so desired by many, to take place, it is not possible,

sible, I affirm, that it should continue; one SERM.  
man will be more skilful, more industrious, IX.  
more fortunate than another, consequently  
he will acquire a greater portion of worldly  
goods. What would you do in this case?  
would you take it from him?—would you  
not allow him to enjoy his own earnings!  
Fine liberty this would be, and much en-  
couragement to sobriety, industry, and ex-  
ertion! who would study, who would labour  
for the comforts and conveniencies of life,  
or do any thing more than merely procure  
the necessaries of it, if he did not hope to  
gain, by his studies or labours, some supe-  
riority, to acquire some possessions above  
his fellows, and to be allowed to transmit  
them to his children? Destroy all hope of  
acquiring and transmitting superior wealth  
and superior power, and you put a stop at  
once to all the arts and sciences, and man  
would soon degenerate into a mere savage;  
he would labour indeed just enough to get



SERM. IX.  wherewithal to satisfy the wants of nature, but no more. It follows then, as you would not destroy the whole happiness and dignity of the human kind, that you must allow men to retain what they acquire by their own abilities or industry.

Hence, immediately will arise an inequality which will be perpetually increasing;—so that if you were to make all men equal in riches now, unless you could at the same time make them all equal in abilities, industry, and good fortune, within the space of a very few years, the business would be to be done again: all the confusion, all the misery, all the bloodshed, which must naturally attend such a flagrant violation of justice and equity, would be again to be endured. I say nothing now of the great advantages which men reap from this inequality of ranks, my only object being to point out to you—that in the nature of things it must exist.

This

This being the case, it is evident that it SERM.  
IX.  
is no more an hardship on one man to be poor and low than it would have been upon another. I allow perhaps, one of you will say—that some must be rich and some must be poor, but why is it my lot to be among the latter?—consider that every one might say the same! self-love may perhaps carry you to fancy that your merits intitle you to have been among the highest; it is probable that you are mistaken; but if not, you must remember that it never was intended that men should be placed in this world according to their different degrees of virtue:—poverty is your lot, and therefore you ought to rest contented with it; why it is your lot it might be difficult to say, except that it is the will of God! It is probable, however, that if any of your immediate forefathers had been eminent for their abilities and industry, or if some of them had not been idle and extravagant,

SERM. that you might have been in a better situ-  
IX. ation.

Do you endeavour to make up what was wanting in them; be sober, be industrious: you may improve your condition beyond what you can foresee, at least you will leave an excellent example to your children, by which they may be incited to improve theirs, and in the mean time you yourself will live more comfortably and happily.

But it is time that I proceed to what I proposed, in the second place, to prove that the poor are free from many evils, which the rich suffer, and that they enjoy some comforts which the rich want; and that there is the greatest reason to believe that their state is as happy on the whole.

The first evil that torments the rich, from which the poor are exempt, is care! The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer



fer him to sleep ; his wealth is a continual  
subject of anxiety to him ; he is anxious  
how he may increase ; he is fearful lest he  
should diminish it. The bosoms of too  
many of this description are ever labouring  
with anxiety, distrust, apprehension.

SERM.  
IX.

Another evil from which the poor are  
free is, want of employment. The labour-  
ing man has always avocations, which fill  
up his time, while the time of the rich is  
often a most weighty burthen upon their  
hands.

This is a much more severe evil than  
those who have never felt it can conceive.  
It is a great evil in itself, as none, it is ge-  
nerally allowed, enjoy life so little, as  
those who have nothing to do ; and it is  
the source of many other evils ! Into what  
degrading and destructive employments are  
the rich often driven, merely to fill up their  
time ! Employments which are prejudicial  
to their health, their character, their eternal

SERM.  
IX.

salvation! Idleness is almost always the source of vice; and therefore the more sensible and best principled among the rich always find out some innocent or useful employment, to which they frequently apply themselves with as much industry and perseverance as those who labour for their daily bread.

This is a plain confession of the advantage of employment; which Providence mercifully for the poor has provided to their hands. Hence arise several other advantages, which should not be passed over in silence. From the constant employment of the labouring man arise health, appetite, sleep: all these the poor, for the most part, enjoy in a greater and sweeter degree than the rich! The luxuries, which the rich have so much at command, few of them have the selfdenial to withstand; hence they are afflicted with languors, painful diseases, and premature old age! their want of sufficient



ficient bodily exercise destroys likewise SERM.  
IX.  
their appetite, and banishes rest from their beds, and it is indubitable that the labouring man enjoys his homely meal and bed much more than the rich do their costly dainties and splendid apartments! You are not to imagine that the great look on their fine houses and gay equipages, and all the appurtenance which belong to grandeur, in the same light that you do: no;—a very little use renders all these things indifferent to them, and they inhabit their stately palaces, and roll along in their splendid carriages, receiving no more happiness from them than you do from your humble cottages, or from walking along by the wayside.

Another advantage which the poor have over the rich, is, the ease with which they put their children out into the world;—you are surprised, perhaps, but nothing is more true.

A poor



SERMON 29 A poor man is under no difficulty in this  
IX

respect: while his children are very young indeed, he is sometimes hard put to it to maintain them; but as soon as they are arrived at maturity, their portion, health and strength, is ready for them, and these with the blessing of God will procure for them their livelihood. The matter is reversed with respect to the rich man; he provides for his offspring without much difficulty in their childhood, but the greatest distress is to settle them properly in the world: they must be settled in such a manner (at least if their happiness is consulted) as that their habits of life shall not be entirely different from what they have been in their parents house; and here is the difficulty, a subject of anxiety with which every parent in the middle and higher ranks of life, who has a numerous offspring, is but too well acquainted.

I now pass to what I proposed in the  
third

third place, to shew that supposing any violent convulsion in the state was to bring about a change of conditions, many would be made miserable by it, and none happy. If it could be supposed that this convulsion could really make all men equal, it requires but little foresight to perceive that it would at the same time make them all miserable! All subordination being done away, confusion, strife, and bloodshed, would unquestionably succeed! To these you may add famine; for, small as the quantity of land would be, which on a division would fall to each man's share, it would be impossible for him, for many reasons too obvious to mention, to give it the proper cultivation.

But this idea of equality is ridiculous. Suppose then that by some great convulsion, though inequality of property should continue, yet that property itself should change hands, that those now rich should become

SERM. become poor, those now poor should be-  
IX. come rich; neither, I affirm, would gain  
by the exchange, the rich would certainly  
be made miserable, nor would it add to the  
happiness of the poor. Although, as I have  
said before, the luxuries, with which the  
rich man is surrounded, are no cause of fe-  
licity to him, yet if they were withdrawn  
from him, their loss would be severely  
felt: he has probably been inured to them  
from his childhood, and, from long use, it  
would be death to him to relinquish them.  
Besides, if it be expected from him, that  
he get his livelihood and maintain his fa-  
mily by the labour of his hands, he must  
infallibly starve; for though originally he  
may have been gifted with the same  
strength and activity as the poor man,  
yet, from having been brought up to  
employments totally different, it is now  
utterly out of his power to exert them  
to any effectual purpose. Let me observe,  
however,



however, that the occupations of the labourer could not be more irksome to the rich man, than the occupations of many of those called rich would be to him who has been all his life used to labour. The statesman, the lawyer, the clergyman, would make but bad figures at the plough, the spade, or the flail; but the labouring man would make quite as bad a figure, and would be still more out of his way in the senate, at the bar, or at his studies! We are all of us both more useful and more happy in the line to which we have been educated and accustomed. The breaking up of a man's habits of life always makes him miserable. This has frequently been seen when a poor man has been suddenly lifted into great riches: the novelty of it may, perhaps, at first have given him some sort of tumultuous satisfaction; but this is so soon over, that his time grows quite a burthen on his hands: his old companions

SERM.  
IX.

SERM. nions are taken up from morning till night  
IX. in their several employments, and have  
no leisure to keep company with him ; and  
if he seeks acquaintance with those of the  
same fortune with himself, he can pro-  
bably neither give nor receive pleasure.  
The usual issue is, that he falls into sot-  
tish customs, lives neither useful to others  
nor happy within himself, and from indo-  
lence and luxury contracts diseases un-  
known to the laborious, which conduct him  
prematurely to the grave. No, no ; the  
only change to be desired in our situation  
(if indeed any be really desirable) is a gra-  
dual one. We all wish to better ourselves ;  
the desire is commendable, and if honestly  
and resolutely pursued, certainly makes us  
useful, and is commonly attended with  
success.

Let us not then, any of us, be our sta-  
tion what it will, murmur and repine at  
it, or desire it to be abruptly changed ; let

us



us not think, however low it may be, that SERM.  
IX.  
it excludes either dignity or happiness!—

Neither of these is at all connected with situation; dignity arises from discharging the duties of our station with industry, honesty, and perseverance, and the peasant who does this is infinitely more dignified than the noble who omits it; while happiness is altogether independent of every thing external, it is seated in the mind, and is as easy (to say the least) to be obtained in a cottage as in a palace. Let us not then look to the right hand or the left with envious or malignant eyes, at the rank or possessions of our neighbour, but let us look straight forward to that point which alone concerns us, the duties and employments of our own station. “ Let  
“ us not covet nor desire other men’s  
“ goods ; but let us learn and labour truly  
“ to get our own living, and to do our  
“ duty in that state of life unto which it  
“ has pleased God to call us.”

SERMON



as it stands, however it may be, that is not

its nature, either dignity or happiness:—

Heaven itself is at all connected with

the things of this world, though descending

the duties of our station with integrity

honesty and perseverance, and the per-

son who does this is happily more dis-

satisfied than the noble who omits it; while

happiness is altogether independent of every

thing external, it is seated in the mind, and

is as easy (to say the least) to be obtained

in a cottage as in a palace. Let us not

then look to the right hand or the left

with envious or malignant eyes; at the

rank or possessions of our neighbours, but

let us look straight forward to that point

which alone concerns us, the duties and

employment of our own station. "Let

"us not covet nor desire other men's

"goods; but let us learn and labour truly

"to get our own living, and to do our

"duty in that state of life unto which it

"has pleased God to call us."

SERMON

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## SERMON X.

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### ON CALUMNY AND DETRACTION.

#### EXODUS xx. xvi.

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy  
neighbour.*

IT is scarcely necessary to observe to you, **SERM.**  
that, although the ten commandments are **X.**  
drawn up in short terms, their meaning is  
very extensive. The Ninth, which I have  
chosen for our present consideration, ap-  
pears perhaps only to forbid a false oath in  
a court of justice to the prejudice of a fel-



SERM.

X.

low-creature, but in reality it comprehends and prohibits every sort of injury, which the tongue of one man can do to the character of another. The most atrocious of these is clearly that, which seems to have been more particularly in the contemplation of the legislator, the solemn affirmation before a magistrate of what we know to be untrue to the injury of another. The offence, both against God and man, which this crime comprises, is so heinous and malignant, that there is no need to dwell on it: it speaks for itself, nor is it possible for words to place the enormity of it in a stronger light.

The next degree of guilt in the violation of the ninth commandment is that of him, who affirms in private life what he knows to be false with an intention of wounding the reputation of his neighbour; it makes little difference, whether he himself were the original inventor of the slander, or whether he reports it after another; if he knows what



what he is saying to be untrue, he is equal- SERM.  
ly culpable. The injury done to the per- X.  
son defamed is often as grievous as what  
he would have received from a false testi-  
mony in a court of justice: his character,  
his livelihood perhaps, which frequently de-  
pends on that character, are the sacrifice;  
or if his circumstances should be such, as  
to prevent his suffering in this last particu-  
lar, yet the wound to his feelings is often  
more insupportable than any misfortune  
to his person or property.

A third offender against the ninth com-  
mandment is he, who repeats to the detri-  
ment of another reports which he has  
picked up in conversation, not indeed know-  
ing them to be false, but which he might  
reasonably presume to be so, or which at  
least he does not know to be true, nor in-  
deed is he solicitous about the truth of  
them: he has heard them, he can give up  
his author, if it be necessary, and therefore

SERM.

X.

surely, he thinks, he has a right to repeat them. Supposing that he had, is such a repetition generous? is it doing as he would wish others to do by him? Far from it! it is cruel; it is what in his own case he would resent as the most barbarous treatment.— But he is deceived in the matter of right; he can have none to affirm any thing, which may injure the character of another, of the truth of which he is not absolutely certain: when he detracts from the reputation of a fellow-creature, it is not allowed for him to be mistaken; he must have seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, or received his information from a source equally infallible, before it be permitted him to speak evil of his brother; and even then there ought to be some very important cause which may in a manner extort from him, and authorize his censures; if there be not, to speak against another, however truly,



truly, is still criminal, still directly contradictory to the precepts of the gospel.

SERM.

X.

Another kind of evil speaking, by which the ninth commandment is transgressed, and the reputation of our neighbour injured, is the fixing on him in general terms a bad character; calling him, for example, covetous, proud, foolish, or hypocritical, assigning to him any ill propensity in the gross, without mentioning any particular instances of it; this is very common, and though not so much condemned as falsely charging a person with any particular bad action; yet it is in effect perhaps more injurious to him: an unjust accusation of some one single crime, if it come to the knowledge of the person accused, he may possibly be able to refute, but when no particular time or place is specified, but merely a general charge brought, how can he ever disprove that imputation, more particularly



SERM. with those to whom he is not thoroughly  
X.  
known?

Another mode of gratifying his passion, which the calumniator practises, is by mis-calling good qualities; or attributing them and the actions which arise from them, to bad or interested motives. If he is told of a generous charitable man, he will call him extravagant, will hint that he is running out his fortune, and ruining his family; or he will insinuate that his generosity arises merely from ostentation, and from the desire of procuring distinction: if he hears of another, who is eminent for his exact performance of his religious duties, he will suggest that he is perhaps hypocritical, that he has some private end to answer by it, and that it is not reverence to God, but hope of gaining the reputation of superior sanctity, and arriving thereby at some promotion, by which he is actuated: in the same manner he will misinterpret and tra-  
duce

duce all other virtues, will likewise construe SERM.  
X.  
into vices qualities and actions which are  
in themselves indifferent.

Now he, who is guilty of this, is eminently a slanderer, since he asserts a thing to my prejudice, of the truth of which he must be doubtful : for how can any other person possibly know my heart ? how can he be acquainted with more of my principles, and the springs which actuate me, than what my words or outward actions declare ? if these uniformly or generally manifest me to be possessed of any particular good quality, how can a fellow-creature presume that I am not possessed of it ? my heart is known to my God alone ; and if all that appears of me to the eyes of men be praiseworthy, it is the height of injustice and slander to traduce me on mere surmise and suspicion ; and there is a peculiar cruelty in it, as surmises and suspicions of this kind I can never refute : if my heart must



SERM. still be pronounced corrupt, however my  
X.  
words or actions may be unsullied or meritorious, how is it possible that I should ever clear myself!

There are many other modes of injuring the reputation of another, to which he who deals in scandal has recourse: one man will tell all the failings of his neighbour, and suppress all his good qualities; another, in representing a particular transaction, will tell only the truth perhaps, but will not tell the whole truth, and by what he omits will fix as deep a stigma on the person or persons concerned, as if he had invented and related of them something more than the truth; a third will destroy reputations by broken hints and expressive signs, and by an apparent unwillingness to speak openly (what possibly has not the least foundation) will stamp on it a greater degree of credit.

A fourth slanderer, and perhaps the  
most



most dangerous and pernicious of all, SERM.  
vents his calumnies under the disguise of <sup>X.</sup>  
benevolence; and with an affectation of  
candour, pretending to vindicate those  
whom he has heard, or feigns that he has  
heard attacked, overwhelms them with the  
deeper obloquy. Sometimes he will effect  
his purpose by designedly bringing forward  
weak arguments in their defence; some-  
times, under the pretext of wiping off one  
false accusation, he will insinuate many  
more; denying or doubting the imputation  
of one crime, he will allow that the person  
accused is guilty in many other respects;  
now he will praise a man inordinately be-  
fore his enemies, on purpose to draw from  
them an attack on him; at another time  
he will attribute to his acquaintances good  
qualities, in which they are notoriously de-  
ficient, for the pleasure of hearing himself  
contradicted, or to bring into doubt those  
virtues which they really possess.

I have

SERM.

X.

are scandalous ears as well as scandalous tongues, and that he who encourages such kind of conversation, by greedily and with pleasure listening to it, who, though he does not concur, shews plainly how much he delights in it, who, by artful questions and affected doubts, draws on the calumniator to launch out and to expatiate, is scarcely less guilty than the person whose vice he thus fosters, and manifests that he approves.

I shall now proceed to point out the chief motives by which men, who are guilty of this odious vice, are actuated, and in so doing evince its wickedness; and I shall conclude with shewing the impolicy of it, and the dangers with which the practice of it is attended. The retailers of what is supposed harmless scandal will be startled, perhaps, when they hear that their vice, as well as that of the  
more



more decided slanderer, almost always has SERM.  
its origin in one or all of the following bad X  
passions : in pride, in envy, in malice. ~

The destroyer of characters is, I think, most commonly actuated by pride; it so happens, that from the desire of distinction, which in a greater or less degree is felt by all men, we have established in our own mind a sort of competition for it with every one around us; we are desirous of surpassing, or at least of having the fame of surpassing them in whatever excellencies fall within our sphere. In the generous, noble-minded man, this desire operates in endeavours to raise himself by the most vigorous exertions to the same level with those whom he sees most distinguished, or even to elevate himself above them; and this being the case, as he values the preservation of his own fame, when he shall have become eminent, he scorns, as well from interest as from prin-



SERM. principle, to detract from the merits of  
 X.  
 another.

But far too many aim at the accomplishment of their wishes by what they suppose a nearer and an easier way; conscious that they are either unequal, or too indolent to exalt themselves to the same situation with those whose praises they hear, they endeavour to degrade these distinguished personages to their own obscurity, that they may in some measure exchange places with them; for they erroneously suppose, that as the deserving are depressed, the worthless are exalted, and therefore, when they are calumniating another, or detracting from his merits, his depression is but a secondary motive with them, their own elevation is the first.

A second root of scandal and detraction is envy: this is very similar in its nature to the species of pride above-mentioned, but yet it is not quite the same; it is even  
 still

still more hateful. The first motive of SERM.  
the proud man, I have just observed, is X.  
to raise himself, and the depression of  
others is but the means by which he per-  
suades himself that he shall compass his  
end; but the envious man has not even  
this palliation, ignoble as it is; an impa-  
tience of excellence, an indignation at me-  
rit, is all which he feels, and if he can but  
degrade and disgrace the distinguished, it  
is all for which he cares.

A third origin of this vice is malice;  
we have received from our neighbour  
some real or imaginary injury; some op-  
position of interests has arisen between  
us; or some other circumstance has hap-  
pened, be it what it may, which has pro-  
voked our dislike of him; perhaps it is not  
in our power to avenge ourselves any  
other way, or not in our idea to an ade-  
quate degree, we therefore commence an  
attack on his character, vilify and abuse  
him



SERM. him on all occasions, disparaging his me-  
 X.  
 ~~~~~ rits, and aggravating his failings, when-  
 ever we have opportunity.

The wicked, hateful, despicable nature of these passions is sufficiently obvious, and these are the usual springs, from which speaking evil of others may be deduced: the bare enumeration of them is alone sufficient to bring a disgrace and odium on whatever flows from them; but we should be still more on our guard against falling into this vice of slander, when we hear the great impediment to our interest and happiness, which it must prove both in this world and the next.

But, first, I will just mention one other ground of scandal, and that is vanity. There are many who repeat and aggravate stories to the disgrace of their neighbours, who are said to be influenced by no other motive than the desire of hearing themselves talk, and contributing to the enter-
 tainment

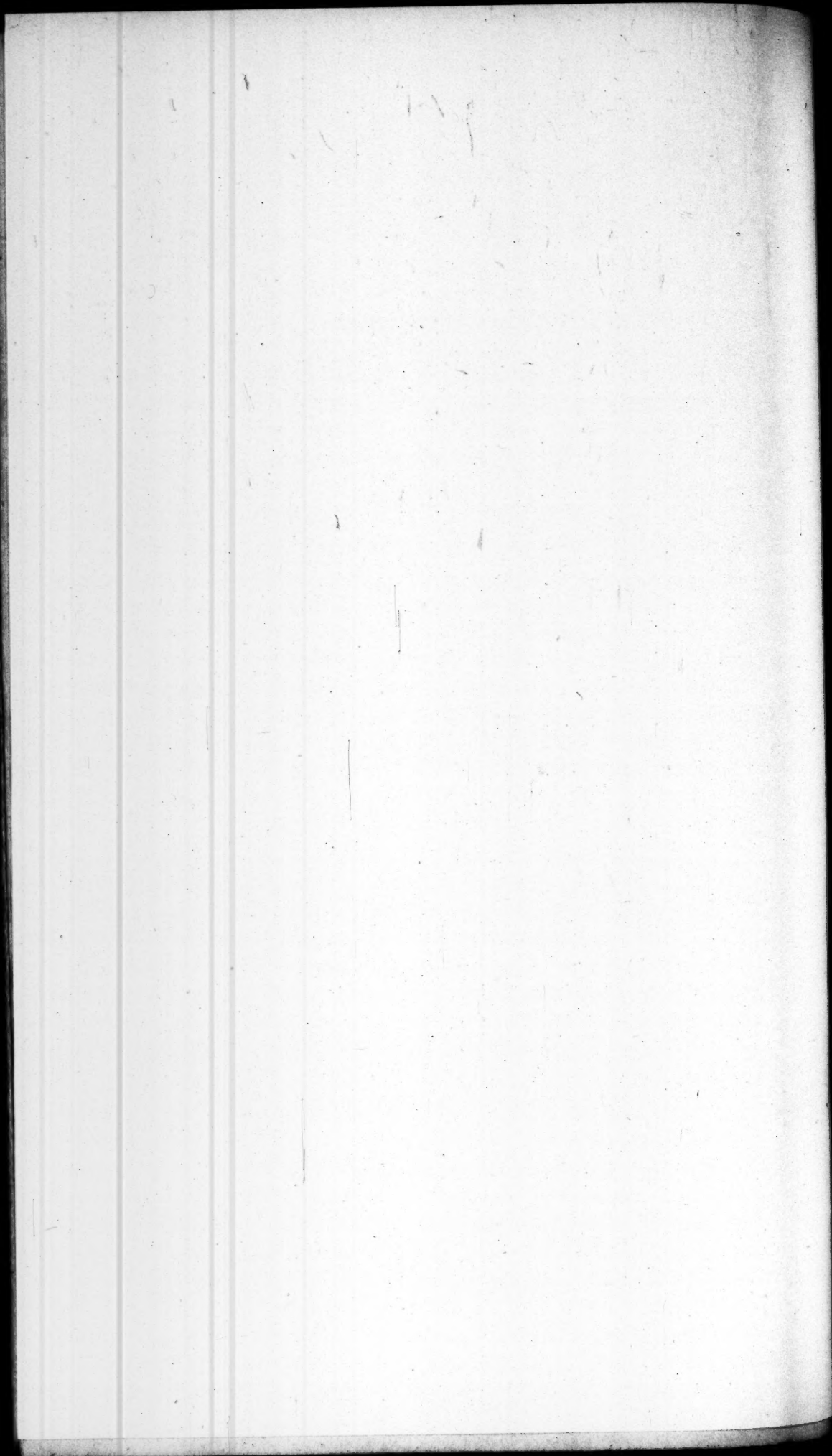
tainment of their companions : but it may be questioned whether vanity be ever the sole motive, and whether, in a greater or less degree, pride, envy, or malice do not mingle with it ; or at the best, supposing the vain man entirely free from any vice in his defamatory practices, and instigated merely by folly, he is yet a pandar to the vices and bad passions of others : he does an infinity of mischief, and that perhaps to the most deserving, and is guilty of the greatest cruelty and injustice. He, who uttereth slander, is a fool ; he is a great enemy to his own interest and happiness, both in this world and the next. This assertion is true, not only of a slanderer, properly so called—of one who invents and propagates falsehoods to the damage of another's reputation—but of him likewise, who on slight suspicions and weak grounds takes up, and goes about repeating rumours, which may possibly in some degree

SERM. gree be true. If the esteem of his fellow-
X.
creatures be of any value in his eyes, let him remember, that he of all others stands the least chance of possessing it; the inventor of slander, the propagator of calumny, the retailer of scandal and detraction, is the object of universal contempt and abhorrence: to those who are immediately injured by him he is particularly odious, nor is there any other kind of robber, whom they would not more readily pardon, than the robber of their good name.

But it is not the injured person alone who pursues the calumniator with his hatred; all men make common cause against him; the virtuous and noble cannot bear the thought of being deprived of a well-earned reputation, and of being subjected to the pestilential breath of obloquy:—they of course hold *him* in detestation, from whom, knowing how he behaves to-
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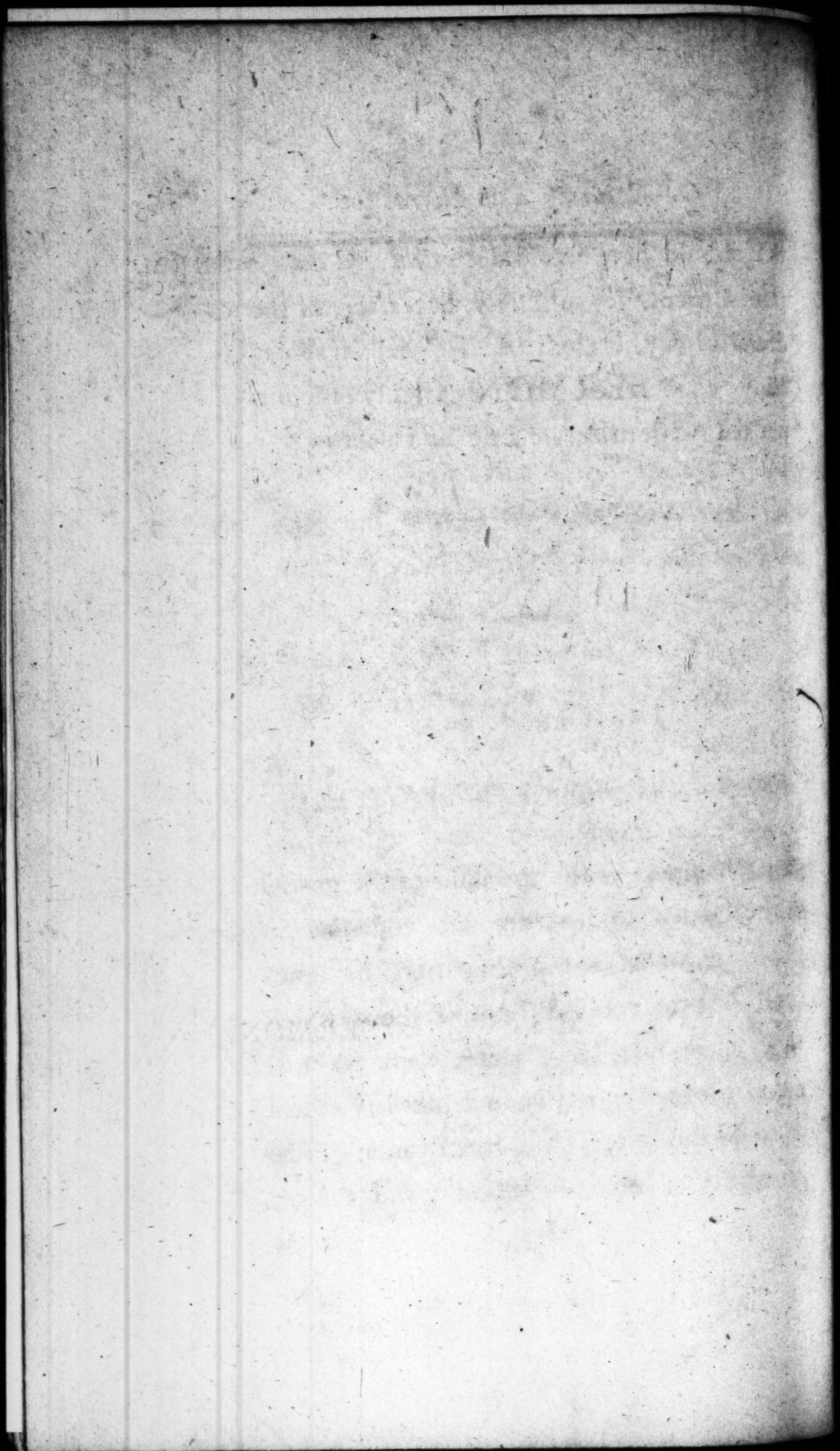
wards others, they have so much reason SERM.
X.
to expect injuries of the same kind to themselves; nay, even the vicious dislike and dread him, and though, from the base nature of all sorts of vice, they may take a pleasure in listening to his defamatory conversation, yet for his person they still entertain an aversion; though they may love the slander, they hate the slanderer. But with his character his views in life must suffer at the same time, since who will have dealings with, who will trust, assist, or promote the common enemy of mankind? His peace of mind too must be entirely gone, as he must live in perpetual apprehension of being detected and brought to shame, and of suffering either in his person or his property for his falsities and ill-nature. Such, and many more, are the evils which attend the calumniator; and, in addition to them, without repent-

SEHM. anee, he will certainly be excluded from
 X.
 the kingdom of heaven. For if none "that
 "maketh a lie shall enter into that hea-
 "venly city," if to all liars their portion
 be assigned "in the lake which burneth
 "with fire and brimstone," then assuredly
 that capital liar—the slanderer—(who lieth
 most injuriously) shall be far excluded from
 happiness, and thrust down into that mi-
 serable place! If, as St. Paul says, no
railer or evil speaker shall inherit the king-
 dom of God, how far from it shall they
 be removed, who without truth or justice
 calumniate and abuse their neighbour!—
 If of every idle or vain word we must
 render a strict account, how much more
 of words of this kind! words, so empty of
 truth and void of equity! words, not only
 negatively vain and useless, but positively
 mischievous and spoken to bad purpose!
 Supposing then, it were possible that slan-
 der

der should here avoid detection and escape SERM.
punishment, yet infallibly, hereafter, at the X.
dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irrever-
sibly condemned, and inevitably recom-
pensed with utter shame and sorrow.

M 2

SERMON



SERMON XI.

AGAINST DRUNKENNESS.

EPHESIANS V. XVIII.

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.

THE business of the minister of the gospel SERM.
XI.
is not only to instruct his audience in those truths of which they may be ignorant, but to remind them of those which they may have forgotten; nay, he will much more frequently find himself called on to do the latter than the former. The generality of men, in all material things,

M 3

know

SERM. ^{XI.} know their duty extremely well; and when they swerve from it, it is either that they are carried away by the violence of some passion, which transports them to despise all arguments against it, or, what is more frequent, these arguments do not present themselves at the time.

This it is, which renders the reading of good books, and listening to discourses from the pulpit, so very useful; it is not that either, generally speaking, tell you any thing quite new, but they bring to your remembrance things of the utmost importance, which the cares and pleasures of the world are too apt to drive from you; and by doing this frequently (if you have the wisdom frequently to have recourse to them) they at last make such an impression as to keep you effectually from sin.

It is on this account that I undertake, at present, to discourse against the vice
for.

forbidden in the text—drunkenness. The SERM.
XI. reasons why we ought not to be guilty of it have been given, and are known to every one;—and the utmost that the preacher can expect to do, is to recall them to your memory, and perhaps to place them in a stronger light.

Drunkenness is destructive of our happiness, both in the world to come, and at present;—if we die while we are in the habits of it, it will most certainly prevent us from going to heaven, and in the mean time it is extremely hurtful to our comfort while we continue on earth.

First, then, I assert that drunkenness is destructive of our happiness in the world to come;—this must be proved from the scripture, in which, in various places, it is strictly forbidden, and those who are guilty of it are threatened with exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. In St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians,

M 4

we

SERM. we read—"Be not drunk with wine,
 XI.

“wherein is excess,”—by which is meant that it entirely unfits a man for self-government, and reduces him to the condition of the madman or the idiot. The same apostle, in writing to the Ephesians again, discountenances this vice; he mentions it, among many others, as incapacitating those who practise it for the attainment of salvation,—“Be not deceived, “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor “adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers “of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, “nor covetous, nor *drunkards*, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Again, in his letter to the Galatians, describing the different fruits of the spirit and of the flesh, of the latter he says—“Now the works “of the flesh are manifest, which are “these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, “strife,

“strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, *drunkenness*, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” You see in what kind of company the drunkard is placed—with the adulterer, the idolater, the murderer, and the robber; and his vice is ranked in the same class with theirs:—it is expressly asserted at the same time, that the kingdom of God can never be gained by such as these. Nor indeed, had scripture been silent on this head, should we have been at any loss to conclude the same from the dictates of our own reason: our bodies, we are assured, are members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost; can we suppose that without displeasing God we may convert them into mere vehicles for gluttonness and drunkenness?—Reason is the distinguishing prerogative of manhood; can we

SERM.
XI.

SERM. we expect to be allowed, with impunity,

XI. voluntarily to divest ourselves of it?—

have we been so far raised above the beasts of the field, of our own accord to degrade ourselves beneath them?—if we do, we surely cannot possibly expect to escape God's wrath and condemnation!—we cannot, for a moment, flatter ourselves that we shall be fit companions for our blessed master and the holy spirits of the saints.

I think, therefore, that it is evident, both from scripture and reason, that the vice of drunkenness is destructive of our prospects of salvation in the world to come;—let us see whether it be not equally subversive of our happiness at present.

Drunkenness then, I assert in the first place, destroys the health, without which all other blessings are little worth. This is almost self-evident; the least observation may prove it to us; a remarkable strength of constitution may indeed be a pro-

protection for a while, but sooner or later SERM.
the punishment will certainly follow,—it XL
certainly will, however appearances may
at present be to the contrary.

Drunkenness destroys the character; I appeal to yourselves if this be not the case. Let a man's skill in his profession or trade be what it will, if he be deficient in sobriety, is it not always a sufficient reason against employing him, if you can with any tolerable convenience meet with any other person? and very justly too, for of what signification is his being able to exercise his calling, if it be at all times uncertain, whether he may not have disqualified himself? - But if it injure his character, it will of course lessen or destroy his means of getting his livelihood; the refusal of those around him, to employ and place confidence in him, has naturally and necessarily this effect,

Drunken-

SERM.

XI.

besides its being a heinous vice in itself, it usually betrays us into many others, as it both heightens our passions, and, by depriving us of the guardianship of reason, unfits us to contend with them. The swearer, when under the influence of this temporary madness, is doubly profane, the sensualist doubly sensual, and the contentious man doubly contentious. Excess of drink has a tendency, in like manner, to increase all our other evil propensities. Supposing, therefore, that it had not in itself that great criminality which it undoubtedly has, yet, as it inflames and incapacitates us from combating every other vicious passion, all approaches to it ought to be avoided with the most scrupulous caution.

This vice is likewise extremely prejudicial to the family of the person who is
guilty

guilty of it, both as it unfits him for the SERM.
XI.
exercise of his calling with that ability  which he might otherwise exert, and deprives him of the confidence of his neighbours, and as it leads him into habits of expence, which in most cases he can ill afford.—It is an observation of Solomon's, which general experience confirms to us, that the glutton and the drunkard shall come to poverty. Added likewise to this ill consequence, it is the property of this vice to create moroseness of manners and brutality of behaviour, which imbitters and corrodes all domestic intercourse. Drunkenness shortens life, and renders, in most cases, death lingering and painful, while, from the weakness both of body and mind, which it never fails to bring on, it indisposes us to meet it with a decent fortitude.

These, I think, are the chief arguments which can be brought against this disgraceful

SERM. ^{XI.} ful vice, and surely none can possibly be stronger; let us bring them into one view: if we habitually practise it, we may be certain that we shall not go to heaven, and in the mean time it renders our abode on earth as disagreeable as possible; it deprives us of the confidence of our fellow-creatures; it subjects us to their contempt; it heightens our bad passions; it destroys our virtues; it unfits us for gaining a livelihood, and supporting ourselves and our families as we ought, and it makes us a disgrace instead of being an ornament, and a terror instead of a comfort, to our relations and friends; it besides destroys health, shortens life, and renders death in most instances dreadfully painful.

There are many who are convinced of all this, but who having early entangled themselves in the habit of drinking, have not hitherto (notwithstanding their desires and endeavours) been able to free them-

themselves from it. To such may be use- SERM.
ful, in addition to setting before them all XI.
the above dreadful consequences of their
vice, an exhortation to avoid those situa-
tions, and to forsake those companions,
where and with whom they have been ac-
customed to offend; if they will not do
this, whatever they may pretend or think,
they are not earnest in their wish of re-
forming; for the probability of their arriv-
ing at it, if they reflect a moment, they
cannot but perceive to be very slender.

As the arguments of those who endea-
vour to prove too much are little attended
to, I must observe, that it is one thing to
have been unintentionally betrayed in a
few single instances into this vice, and ano-
ther to be an habitual drunkard, and that
these dreadful consequences which I have
mentioned belong particularly to the latter,
nor are they to be understood as extending
to him who may occasionally and without
pre-

SERM. premeditation have deviated from sobriety;
XL. but yet every instance is a sin, every instance is unworthy of a man, much more of a Christian, and if these instances are frequently repeated, they soon degenerate into a habit, and end finally in the ruin both of soul and body.

Let us beware of the most remote advances to it; if we do not, we may, with no bad intentions and with the utmost detestation of the character, become subject to it before we are aware, and then it will require all our resolution to extricate ourselves; and so great is the weakness of mind which it brings on, that, if we may judge from the experience of what has been the case with others, there is too much reason to dread that all our resolution will be in vain.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ON STEALING.

EXODUS XX. XV.

Thou shalt not steal.

WHEN the preacher chooses for the sub-
ject of his counsels the prohibition which I
have just read to you, the generality of his
audience, I believe, feel their consciences
perfectly at ease; they, with much self-
complacency perhaps, congratulate them-
selves that this is a speculation which can-
not at all concern them: whatever are the

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XII.

SERM.
XII.

other vices with which they may be justly charged, they hope they do not pay themselves too high a compliment in acquitting themselves of the vice of stealing; they may therefore quietly resign themselves to the contemplation of their worldly cares and pleasures.* But let me beg that you will not withdraw your attention for this reason; this commandment is more extensive, and takes in a greater variety of cases than you imagine, which, when you come to have explained to you, you may find perhaps, however disgusted you may be at the name of stealing, that you are not able wholly to exculpate yourselves from the offence.

The commandments, which were delivered by God to Moses for the use of the children of Israel, contain the great heads of our duty; but as they are only ten in number, and drawn up in such short terms,

* Ogden.

it

it is not the mere letter, but the spirit of **SERM.**
them also, to which we are to attend. **XII.**

I will explain my meaning.—The third commandment says—“Thou shalt not take
“the name of the Lord thy God in vain,
“for the Lord will not hold him guiltless,
“that taketh his name in vain.” Do you
think that he alone is guilty of a breach of
this law, who makes use of the name of
God on trifling occasions? No—surely,
it is equally broken by all kinds of swear-
ing and cursing whatever. Swear not at
all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s
throne, nor by earth, for it is his footstool,
but content yourselves with a bare affirma-
tion and denial, for whatsoever is beyond
these cometh of evil, is vicious in itself,
and a violation of the third commandment.

In the seventh we read—“Thou shalt
“not commit adultery.” Some, perhaps,
may think that this statute will not reach

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them, so long as they abstain from a criminal intercourse with the wife of another, however profligate they may be in other respects; but they are much mistaken, it certainly comprehends all unlawful commerce between the sexes whatever, every sort of impurity, both in action and even in word and thought. In like manner, the law, which we are now considering, is by no means confined to direct depredations on the property of another, but comprises also those which are indirect; not only forbids openly robbing, or secretly pilfering, but extends likewise to cheating and over-reaching in all their various shapes; and though I do not say that the cunning, sly man, who embraces every opportunity of taking advantage of his honest, unsuspecting neighbour, is an equally atrocious character with the highwayman or the house-breaker,—I do say that he is equally guilty of violating the precept we are now

con-

considering. But there are others, whose SERM.
XII.
transgressions against this precept are not
so general, whose guilt is confined to a few
cases, or perhaps only to one, who are far
from suspecting that they are culpable at
all, and would be indignant at the most re-
mote suspicion of it. Let me bespeak their
attention whilst I enumerate a few instances
of unfair dealing, which are much too com-
mon, and then let them ask their own con-
science, if it can with impartiality acquit
them?

The first frauds, I shall mention, are
those which are committed against govern-
ment; to express the matter plainly, those
which people are guilty of, when they do
not pay all the taxes and duties which the
law enjoins. Now it is wonderful how
many there are, even of those who are well
disposed, and think themselves exactly ho-
nest in every other respect, who make no
scruple of offending in this: they will even

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argue on the propriety of it, and ridicule any doubts of its rectitude.—Permit me to state this affair clearly, and perhaps the defrauding of government may appear in a different light. When a tax is laid, it is always calculated that it will produce a certain sum; if it does not, another must be invented to supply its deficiency; now the most probable method of making it fall short, is, to evade it, not to pay it at all, or not to pay so much as we ought to do; if one has a right to do this, another has; suppose, therefore, all to do it, another tax must in consequence be imposed, of equal burden, and we are none of us gainers. But suppose again (what is really the case) that some do pay what they ought, and some do not, still there will be a deficiency, and something else must be found out to make up the sum of what it falls short, and to this, observe—he, who paid to the full what he ought to do to the former, must like-

likewise contribute his share. Now they SERM.
XII.
who do not pay fairly are the cause of this additional burden to him, and whether they rob their neighbour with their own hands, or do it through the medium of government, makes little difference; his loss is the same, and, when the matter is properly considered, their guilt scarcely less. It is no excuse for a man to say—‘What signifies what little I diminish the revenue!’ because, if one man has a right to do this, another has, and if all were to do it, the consequence is sufficiently evident. Nor, again, is it any excuse to say—‘The generality of my neighbours are as bad as myself;’ for reformation must begin somewhere, and it behoves every one, without attending to his neighbour, to take care of his own conduct.

Next to frauds on government, I believe, frauds on the church are looked on as of the smallest consequence. This is a

SERM.

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subject which will not appear to advantage in the hands of the clergy; I shall therefore merely observe, that the owner in purchasing, and the occupier in hiring an estate, pay proportionably less for it, in consideration of the tithes which are to come out of it; that the clergyman has the same title to the latter, as they have to the possession and profits of the former,—*that* which all derive from the law of the land, and therefore the eighth commandment is violated, whenever his dues are unjustly withheld from him.

The next breach of this precept, of which I shall take notice, is that which the rich man is guilty of, when he refuses to do his poor brethren justice, and sets them at defiance, because they have not the means of applying to the law for protection: in this country, thank God! the law is impartially administered, but it requires in many cases much expence to come at it. Now, where
a great

a great man unjustly deprives a little one of his rights, merely on this idea, I declare to you I think a housebreaker is an honest character in comparison with him. But this crime is of so flagrant a nature, that I hope it is not very common; we will pass to one which I fear is: there are many who would be greatly hurt at the idea of finally refusing their right to those with whom they are concerned, who yet make no scruple of vexatiously delaying it, who are in the habits of withholding from their tradesmen and dependants beyond the time which has been stipulated by agreement, or which custom has established, the wages of their honest industry. This offence is frequently forbidden and menaced in the scriptures: in the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy we read—"Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, that is poor and needy; at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down

SERM.

XII.

“down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth
 “his heart upon it; lest he cry against
 “thee unto the Lord, and it be a sin unto
 “thee.” St. James, in his address to the
 rich, calling on them to weep for the mi-
 series which they are about to endure,
 mentions this crime as one of the causes:
 “Behold the hire of the labourers, who
 “have reaped down your fields, which is
 “of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and
 “the cries of them which have reaped are
 “entered into the ears of the Lord of
 “Sabbath.”

But as the wealthy are tempted to refuse
 or to delay doing justice to the poor, from
 a consciousness that their riches give them
 the power of doing it with impunity; so
 are those very riches a temptation with the
 poor to be less scrupulous in their conduct
 towards the wealthy: ‘What,’ say they,
 ‘will a rich man be the worse for what
 ‘little we take from him? he will scarce

miss

miss it, and how largely will it contribute to the comfort of our families! But this is a very wrong method of arguing; for though the circumstance of its not being heavily felt, by the person against whom it is committed, may be some slight mitigation of a crime, it will never make it no crime at all. A thief is still a thief, though the person, from whom he has stolen, were possessed of all the riches of the East. Other violations of the eighth commandment (besides directly bearing off the property of another) of which the poor may be guilty, are, breaches of trust, that is, either themselves defrauding their superiors, or suffering them to be defrauded of those things which are committed to their charge; breaches of agreement, the not performing the work which they have covenanted to do for a certain stipend, or the designingly doing it in a negligent and improper way.

But

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But besides these acts of injustice, which pass between superiors and inferiors, there are many which take place between equals, or those who are considered as such, with regard to the traffic which is passing between them. "As a nail sticketh fast between the joining of stonies, so does sin stick close between buying and selling." I do not think it necessary to dwell on the guilt of a deficiency in weights and measures, the adulterating of the commodities in which a tradesman deals, and other iniquitous practices of a similar nature, the atrociousness of which is so evident, that nothing, which can be said, can exhibit it in stronger colours; but it may be necessary, as it is certainly consistent with truth, to remark, that all exorbitant profits are unfair and fraudulent, as are likewise, in the very highest degree, all advantages which are taken by the cunning on generosity, peaceableness, and simplicity. "Do unto

thee

"all

“ all men as you would that they should
“ do unto you:” put yourself in the case
of the person with whom you are con-
cerned, and so act by him, as you could
reasonably desire, if you were to change
situations, that he should act by you. Oh
that men would pay attention to this ex-
cellent rule! and how safe would they be
from either knowingly or inadvertently
breaking any of those commandments,
which relate to their duty towards their
neighbour! No need *then* to explain and
point out their extensive meaning; a good
heart is the best interpreter, one comment,
which is sincerely drawn from that source,
is worth a thousand precepts. What a world
would this be, if all men would persuade
themselves to be guided by the above-men-
tioned rule! Evils, doubtless, would still
exist, such as sickness, loss of friends, and
some others; but all these are nothing, ei-
ther in number or in weight, in comparison
with

SERM

XII.

SERM. with those which, from malice or self-inter-
 XIX rest, we inflict on each other.

I will conclude with an assertion, which experience will strongly impress upon you, that the impolicy of a fraudulent disposition is not less than the wickedness of it; it is always, sooner or later, detected, and detection is inevitably followed by contempt and distrust. On the other hand, the man of strict integrity, however low in situation and circumstances, will be sure to be respected and trusted, and the respect and confidence of those around us is the most certain road to opulence and preferment. But supposing it otherwise, supposing that the villain were to prosper by his frauds, and had sufficient artifice to hide them, and to maintain the esteem of his fellow-creatures, and supposing further, that the honest man passed his life in indigence and disgrace, still the case of the latter is infinitely preferable to that of the former; since

since there is a day coming, when this unequal distribution will be fully rectified, when the prosperous knave shall find how little he has acquired by his dishonesty, though he should have gained the whole world, when he has lost his own soul, and the conscientious, upright man, who has been exposed to unmerited sufferings on account of his integrity, will meet with ample recompence in the enjoyment of unfading felicity for ever and ever.

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SERMON

since there is a day coming, when this line shall

XIII

equal distribution will be fully rectified, when the prosperous knave shall find how little he has acquired by his dishonesty, though he should have gained the whole world, when he has lost his own soul, and the conscientious upright man, who has been exposed to unmerited sufferings on account of his integrity, will meet with ample recompence in the enjoyment of unobscured felicity for ever and ever.

SERMON

When I shall call to mind the many

SERMON XIII.

AGAINST SWEARING.

EXODUS XX. VII.

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy
God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him
guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

OF the various vices, into which mankind
are betrayed by passion or inattention, there
is no one which is committed on such
slight temptation, and of consequence with
such little excuse, as the vice of common
swearing. The folly of it is on an equality
with the guilt. That from all other sins
some present profit or pleasure is either

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XIII.

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reaped

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XIII.

reaped or expected, even those, who are most averse from them, cannot but acknowledge; but the joys or hopes of the swearer, none, I believe, but himself can conceive. Yet some satisfaction he *must* have, some end he must propose to himself, however strange it may appear, but it is worth his consideration, whether they are adequate to the heinous guilt and extreme danger which he incurs.

The practice is strictly forbidden in those tables which were delivered by Moses to the Jews, and which were written immediately by the finger of God: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." The meaning of which is—Thou shalt not on any but the most serious occasions mention the name of the Lord thy God, for if thou doest, the Lord will look upon thee as extremely guilty, and will most severely

verely punish thee. But perhaps it may be said, this was only binding on the people of Israel, and might merely be meant, as it is well known the chief part of their ceremonial law was, to preserve them from the idolatry of the nations around them; but it happens that Christ, *our* master and law-giver, has repeated and even extended the prohibition:—"Ye have heard that it hath been said of them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform to the Lord thy God thy oaths; but I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by earth, for it is his footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king, neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair black or white, but let your communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

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XIII.

SERM.
XIII.

These oaths, which are here forbidden, were, it seems, customary among the Jews; they perhaps thought by them to evade the third commandment, and to reap the advantage of swearing (whatever it is) without incurring the guilt; but our Saviour teaches his disciples a different lesson; he tells them, that every thing beyond a serious affirmation or denial proceedeth from something bad in the disposition, and is dictated by the devil:—"Whatsoever is
" more than these cometh of evil, or of the
" *evil one*," the same word being used in the original language, which is applied on other occasions to our grand adversary.

These express prohibitions of the Almighty and his Son, together with the assurance of the extreme guilt, which we contract by the practice of this vice, and the knowledge that it is the great enemy of our souls who tempts us to commit it, ought alone to be sufficient to make us abstain
from

from it, though we were able to give no SERM.
XIII.
account of the cause why it is required of us: but if it shall appear, that in this (as in all other of his commandments) God consults *our* good, the reasons for our abstinence will be doubly binding.

Familiarity, it is generally allowed, is removed but one step from contempt. A respect and reverence for the Almighty is the great foundation of religion and virtue, the only firm and constant principle which can incite us uniformly to what is right, and deter us from what is wrong. Now I think it cannot but tend greatly to undermine this respect, and to destroy this reverence, if we are perpetually, on slight occasions and in our casual and daily discourses, bringing in the name of God, and appealing to him. Experience may convince us, that this opinion is well founded; for it rarely, if ever, happens, but the common swearer is equally disobedient to many

SERM. of the other precepts and prohibitions of
XIII. his religion; his vice is of too infectious a
quality to be a solitary one, it is usually
either accompanied or followed by a large
retinue.

One of the greatest men that these kingdoms have produced, is said never, even on the most serious occasions, to have pronounced the name of God, without making a considerable pause; whether it was that he might reflect on the infinite perfections of him whom he was naming, or whether he was pondering if the subject were of sufficient importance to authorize the mention of the Deity,—so thoroughly and awfully was he impressed with a sense of God's tremendous majesty!

Indeed, whatever may be pretended by those who are perpetually appealing to their maker on the most trifling and empty occasions, whenever they think fit to be angry, or earnest, or imperious, or jocular,

it

it is very certain that religion can have taken no deep root in their hearts. The fear of God, the scriptures frequently declare, is the only sure basis of obedience to his laws; now it is absolutely impossible that a man should have a proper fear of a person, with whose name he is continually making so free! But the keeping God's commandments can alone insure to us happiness, both in this world and the next: when, therefore, he ordered us to abstain from a practice, which would lead us to violate them, it was clearly our good which he was consulting. Whether then we regard the Almighty's ordinance, or pay respect to our own interest, we are indissolubly bound to be obedient to the third commandment.

I will now consider some of the reasons given for swearing, and some of the arguments alleged in its defence. One of the most usual excuses of the common swearer

SERM. is, that he has got such a habit of it, that
XIII. he does not know when he offends; this
may be said perhaps with equal truth of many other ill habits, but is in fact not the least extenuation of their guilt; it is indeed rather an aggravation of it, for to what a degree must we have offended, before we become so hardened, as not to be sensible whether we offend or not. No one can pretend that he began the practice of swearing, or any other evil practice, without a knowledge of its being wrong, and frequent checks and remonstrances of his conscience: it is in contradiction and defiance to these that he must have acquired that *habit* of vice, which he now alleges in its excuse; the criminality of contracting the habit is entirely his own, and it is a well-known maxim in equity, that no one is to be suffered to draw advantage from his own wrong. Let not then the swearer think to escape the punishment denounced against oaths
and

and imprecations, by pleading that he knows SERM.
XIII.
not when he utters them ; it is himself alone, who is to blame for having attained to such a pitch of profligacy : though from the frequency of his presumption, he may not always take notice of it himself, he may be assured God does ; and notwithstanding the inattention and forgetfulness, which the custom of doing this frequently produces, there is a day coming when every repeated instance of his guilt must be accounted for.

Another excuse of the common swearer is, that he really means no harm ;—this is a curious plea ; he is daily and hourly perhaps acting in defiance to an express command of his Creator, and insulting his God to his face, and he thinks to atone for it by saying that he means no harm ! Even if the vice, of which he is guilty, were not so strictly forbidden, it is of the most prejudicial consequences both to himself

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self and others; it tends to lessen, both in his own breast and in the estimation of those around him, that awful veneration for the divine majesty, which is the surest guardian of his laws. And surely, if this be the effect of a practice, it is not the pretence that our intentions are innocent, and will exculpate or procure us forgiveness.

A third set of swearers are those who profess that they are obliged to it, that they mean by it to gain observance of what they say, that their oaths are merely intended to procure belief to their assertions, or give importance to their commands, reproofs, and menaces. To say nothing of the very great reflection which, by such a defence, these persons throw on their own veracity and dignity, it is much to be suspected that the very end, which they propose to themselves by the violation of a plain precept of their religion, is not attained.

tained. The most solemn things, when frequently used, lose much of their consequence; one of the reasons why so great a stress is laid upon an oath in a court of justice, is, that it is a mode of affirmation which is uncommon: and therefore he who binds himself by it, is by so much the less likely to be guilty of a falsity. SERM.
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Now when the same appeal to God is observed on every trifling occasion in our familiar conversation, oaths become of no greater importance than other assertions; and if I would not believe the common swearer on his bare word, so neither would I believe him, whatever imprecation he might add to it, since he is constantly furnishing me with proof that he himself sets no higher value on the one than he does on the other. Is not this the case? Let the blasphemer deny it, if he can!—to himself I would refer it, whether the simple affirmation of a serious person does
not

SERM. not meet with at least *equal* credit with
XIII. his oath?

As to the plea—that the orders, the reproofs, or the threats of a person in authority, are more efficacious from being attended with imprecations, it is liable to the same objection which I have just made; when oaths and curses are used on every occasion, they are no more regarded than other words, they are looked on as coming of course, and those to whom they are directed are not influenced by them in any additional degree. But if the case were otherwise, supposing them to have all the weight that they were expected, it is worth our consideration, whether the acquisition of a little temporary authority with our fellow-creatures be worth purchasing at the expence of our eternal salvation.

These are the chief reasons and arguments, which men bring in support of this heinous and too common vice: you see how little there is in them.

I shall

I shall conclude with observing, that SERM.
XIII.
there are many to be met with, who would be shocked at the idea of plain, downright swearing, with whom it is yet grown into a custom to approach very near to it; they dare not take the name of their Creator in vain in a direct manner, but shew the badness of their intentions by disguising solemn words, till they are less disgusting to the ear, though equally offensive to the judgment. These half-bred reprobates prove that they would be wicked, if they durst; and I know not whether the consciousness of being wrong, which their caution declares, does not augment their criminality. Abstain from all appearance of evil; let us not only *be* virtuous, but let us endeavour to *appear* so. He who ventures, in defiance of the remonstrances of his conscience, to approach the borders of any vice, and, much more, he who delights to put on its semblance, too clearly evinces his

SERM. his evil principles ; though his words and
XIII.
actions may seem outwardly under some
little restraint, his heart is certainly un-
sound.

Be it our care to aim at perfection : notwithstanding our most strenuous efforts, we shall still, alas ! fall too short of it ; but if we only endeavour not to be openly profligate, not to be notoriously depraved, and content ourselves with even less than negative virtue, we may be assured we shall never attain that degree of holiness, which can alone entitle us to see the Lord.

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

ON THE CRUCIFIXION.

PREACHED ON GOOD FRIDAY.

ST. LUKE XXIII. BEGINNING OF V. XXXIII.

*And when they were come to the place
which is called Calvary, there they cru-
cified him.*

THIS day being appointed by our church SERM.
XIV.
to be kept holy, in memory of our Sa-
viour's crucifixion, I shall give you a short
account of the principal circumstances
which preceded and accompanied that most
important event. There being, as we might
expect, some small difference in the man-
ner

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ner in which the four evangelists relate their story, some of them omitting particulars which others have put down, I shall not confine myself to any one of them, but shall draw from the writings of all the four whatever may appear to me most worthy of our notice.

When Jesus Christ had finished the work which he came upon earth to perform, when he had given men all the instruction for their conduct which was necessary, and had proved to them sufficiently, by the miracles which he performed, that he was sent by God, he prepared himself to complete the purpose of his coming, by submitting to a voluntary death; and accordingly, though he well knew the malice of his enemies, and the plots which they were laying for his destruction, he resolutely determined to go up to Jerusalem, at the great feast of the passover. The chief priests and elders of the Jews had all along hated Jesus, partly

partly from envy on account of the innocence of his life, and the great character which his wisdom and his miracles procured him, and partly because he affirmed himself to be the Christ whom their prophets had foretold would come, and whom indeed themselves expected: but they erroneously looked for a very different sort of Christ from him; they looked not for a meek, an humble, a lowly Saviour, a companion of the poor, and a friend of the distressed, — but they flattered themselves with the hopes of a mighty prince, who should free them from the yoke of the Romans, to which they now reluctantly submitted, and should enable them to subdue and place them at the head of all the nations of the earth. Their disappointment was great, and their rage at this disappointment not less. The bulk of the people, however, who had been spectators of our Saviour's wonderful works, had seen the

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SERM. dumb made to speak, the deaf to hear, the
XIV. blind to see, and even the dead raised,—
loved and respected him : these enemies of
his, therefore, were afraid to seize him
openly, lest a tumult should be made, and
the people rescue him, and accordingly
they sought and found means, by corrupt-
ing one of his immediate followers, Judas
Iscariot, to execute their plan privately,
when only his usual attendants were about
him.

It may seem perhaps extraordinary that
Jesus, who certainly had a perfect know-
ledge of future events, should choose such
a person as Judas to be an apostle ; but
there are reasons which may be given for
it, that take away the wonder. The twelve
apostles were always about Jesus ; now,
perhaps, it might have been said, if they
had all continued united, that the religion
which they afterwards preached, was con-
certed amongst them for some worldly
end,

end, and was a false religion ; but as one of them went so far as to betray his master, he certainly would have discovered the secret, had there been one ; or had there been any blot in Christ's life or manners, he could not but have been glad to have revealed it : but we find nothing of this kind ; on the contrary, when he saw his injured master seized, and likely to be executed, his conscience smote him, he returned the wages of his iniquity, and went and put himself to death. So you see our Lord's choosing such a person as Judas for an attendant has its uses. It was while they were sitting at table, partaking of the feast of the passover, that he gave the first hint that one of the twelve should betray him ; and they were all much hurt at it, and anxiously solicitous each of them to know if it should be himself ; but Peter beckoned to John, who was placed next to Christ, to ask him which of them it

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would be? "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it;" and he gave it to Judas Iscariot. It was at this same last supper that he instituted the sacrament, to be observed by all his followers of every age, in remembrance of his death, and it was here likewise that he rose from table, and condescended to wash and to wipe his disciples' feet, setting an example, as he himself said, of the humility and benevolence which it was the duty of Christians to practise. "If I, who am your lord and master, do this humble office for you, how much more ought you to do every kind of good service towards each other!" But he foretold not alone that Judas should betray him; he foretold likewise that all his other disciples should forsake him in his danger, and to Peter particularly, who made vehement protestations of the constancy with which he would stand by him, he foretold that ere the cock crew, he

he would deny him thrice. It was immediately on rising from this supper, that he went into the garden of Gethsemane, where he suffered that dreadful agony, so dreadful that the sweat burst from him like clots of blood, or, as some understand it, real blood burst through the pores of his skin. It was now likewise that he prayed so earnestly three times in the same words:—
“ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” St. Luke tells us, that an angel was sent from heaven to comfort and support him. There seem to be two difficulties here, which deserve to be considered. If Jesus knew that he came into the world for the express purpose of dying on the cross for the sins of men, which he certainly did know, how comes it that when the hour was approaching, he should pray so fervently against it? This is the first difficulty, and perhaps it may

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be done away thus; he did not really mean that he wished to be exempt from the cross, but I think we may understand his words thus:—“Father, though the weakness natural to the human body, with which I am clothed, would prompt me to desire to avoid the cruel sufferings that I am about to undergo, yet, as it is the salvation of the world which I shall accomplish by such sufferings, I submit,”—“not my will but thine be done.” Each time, you observe, he concluded his petition, with declaring himself resigned to his father’s purpose. The other difficulty is how to account for his dreadful agony: it could not arise merely from the fear of death; that appears to be quite inconsistent with the heroic fortitude which he had displayed through the whole course of his life; nor is it at all probable, superior to all weaknesses as was his character, that he should have felt such extreme terrors

at

at submitting to that which multitudes of SERM.
XIV.
his followers, of every age and of both
sexes, afterwards encountered for his sake,
not merely with unconcern, but even with
joy. It could not arise from any imagi-
nation which he had of the anger of God,
for he knew that God was never better
pleased with him than at this time. There
are two accounts given of this matter, and
as nothing certain can be determined on
it, I must leave you to adopt that which
you shall think most probable. Either will
convey to us a most solemn and important
lesson. One is, that the pains under which
Jesus now laboured, were inflicted by the
immediate hand of God himself; that they
were of the same kind as the wicked shall
suffer hereafter, and if this were the case,
they were certainly such as man never
felt, and the anguish which he expressed
was no more than adequate to the cause.
Whether it was (if we adopt this cause of

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his suffering) that these pains were necessary to complete the end for which he descended on earth, namely, the redemption of the souls of mankind; or whether he endured them as a warning to give men a proof of the dreadful anguish which awaits the impenitently wicked,—anguish, which shewed itself so visibly even in the Lord of life—which of these two were the reason of his having this misery laid on him, is uncertain; but either of them are sufficient to declare to us the vast malignity of sin, and the terrible danger to which it exposes us.

Another cause of his agony, which is assigned by some, is this—that he had at this time before his eyes, in the strongest light, the heinous and malignant nature of sin, and God's severe threatenings against it; and though he could not but be sensible that, by the death he was about to undergo, he should rescue those from it who chose
to

to adopt him for their master, yet he too well knew, at the same time, how much his benevolent purpose would be defeated by a sinful and adulterous world, and how many, in defiance of all his care and suffering, would be resolute to perish. This, some think, will account fully for the extreme anguish which he appears to have undergone. However this be, it was to this garden of Gethsemane (a place it seems to which he frequently resorted) that Judas conducted those persons whom the priests and elders had commissioned to apprehend him. Now it had been agreed that Judas should point out Jesus to them by kissing him, which he accordingly did, saying at the same time, "Hail, master!" to whom our blessed Lord returned this mild answer—"Friend, wherefore art thou come? is it to betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" His disciples, however, when they saw their beloved master seized, were
not

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not so patient; and one of them, Peter, drew a sword and cut off the ear of a servant belonging to the high priest: for this he was reprehended by Jesus, and ordered to put up his sword: "Thinkest thou" added he "that I cannot now pray to my Father, " and he shall presently give me more " than twelve legions of angels? but how " then shall the prophecies be fulfilled, " which foretell my death?" At the same time, he touched the servant's ear, and miraculously healed it! He then addressed himself to those who were sent to apprehend him, and thus expostulated with them—"Are ye come out against me as " against a thief, with swords and with " staves? why did you not take me in the " day while I was teaching (as I constantly " did) in the temple?—but this is your " hour; and ye are permitted to do this, " that the scriptures may be fulfilled."—It was now that, according to his prediction,

tion, all his disciples deserted him. Peter, SERM.
XIV. however, and one of the others, followed him at a distance to the high priest's house, whither he was conducted; and it was here that, as our Lord had foretold, Peter three times denied that he was acquainted with him; and immediately the cock crew; and Jesus, at the same time, casting a reproachful look upon him, his conscience smote him—and he went out and wept bitterly. But the high priest, and the other rulers of the Jews, are now assembled in council, and Jesus is brought before them:—to the questions which are put to him, he answers very sparingly, well knowing how little it would avail him; he, however, denied not that he was the Son of God, but asserted that hereafter they should be convinced of it, when they saw him sitting at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Upon this, the high priest declared that he had spoken blasphemy; and
they

SERM. they all clamorously gave their opinion
XIV. that he was deserving of death; and they
began to insult him in various ways, some
spitting on him, some buffeting him, and
some covering his eyes, and then calling on
him to prophesy, to tell by inspiration,
who it was that struck him. But it was
now morning, and by this time the Roman
governor was sitting in his judgment hall;
they therefore take Jesus, and bind him,
and conduct him thither. To understand
this, you must remember that the Jews
had been conquered by another nation, cal-
led the Romans, and were now entirely
subject to them, and were even governed
by an officer set over them by that nation:
this officer was, at this time, Pontius Pilate.
It is probable that they had not the power
of determining in capital cases, but merely
of trying such smaller offences as might
deserve punishments short of death; and,
accordingly, being resolved to be satisfied
with

with nothing less than the destruction of SERM.
XIV.
Jesus, they were obliged to have recourse
to the Roman magistrate. It is observ-
able, that when they came before him they
changed the ground of their accusation;
at the high priest's house, they had only
charged Jesus with styling himself the
Christ, and the Son of God, and with say-
ing that he would destroy the temple; but,
when they are before Pilate, they allege
that they found him perverting the nation,
and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar
(the Roman emperor, who was Pilate's
master) and, likewise, that he pretended
to be a king. The two first of these ac-
cusations were manifestly false, and on the
last they put a wrong construction; for
Jesus had all along been a peaceable and
quiet subject: and though he justly might
style himself a king, he always, as he did
to Pilate, confessed that his kingdom was
not of this world. In general, however,
he

SERM. he preserved the same dignified silence
XIV. before the Roman magistrate as he had
done before the high priest of the Jews,
answering very sparingly, and usually not
at all, to his questions. Pilate appears to
have been greatly surprised at this; he
was however perfectly convinced of Jesus'
innocence, and over and over again de-
clared that he found him quite guiltless
of those offences which were laid to his
charge: he laboured besides, earnestly, to
be excused from condemning him; and as
there was a custom, at this time of the
year, always to release one prisoner, he
was desirous that Jesus should be the man,
and proposed it to the people more than
once; but they all, at the instigation of
their rulers, cried out for the release of
Barabbas, a rebel and a murderer, and in-
treated that he would crucify Jesus, and
even threatened him that they should look
on him as guilty of disaffection to his
master

master if he acquitted him. This last argument seems to have prevailed with him; and at length, though reluctantly, he complied with their wishes. This Pilate was a man of very bad character, and had been guilty of divers acts of oppression and injustice in the administration of his government; and it seems to have been a dread of provoking the resentment of the principal men of the Jewish nation, and inducing them to lay his crimes before Cæsar, and this among the rest, that he had suffered a person who called himself a king to escape—that prevailed on him to condemn one whom he knew to be innocent: he however, as I observed before, very reluctantly complied; and even in passing sentence called for water, and washed his hands (as if that would excuse him) saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it.”—To which the Jews all replied, “His blood be
“ upon

SERM.
XIV.

SERM. "upon us and upon our children!" Jesus

XIV.

was now again subjected to every kind of insult and outrage; he was scourged, spit upon, beaten; he had a crown of thorns placed on his head, a purple or scarlet robe (the dress of royalty) on his body, and a reed by way of sceptre put into his right hand, and the soldiers in mock humiliation bowed their knees to him, and cried, "Hail king of the Jews!" At length they lead him to the place of execution, and fix him to the fatal cross; and with him, likewise, they crucify two robbers, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. Crucifixion was a death which the Romans never inflicted but on those whom they esteemed the vilest of criminals; it was most excruciatingly painful, and at the same time very lingering, since the sufferer was fixed to the cross by nails which were driven through his hands and feet, and he died by the blood which flowed from those wounds.

wounds. Some interesting and affecting SERM.
XIV.
circumstances occurred after Jesus was
fixed to the cross. Great as must have
been his sufferings, his usual benevolence,
his usual amiable temper, does not forsake
him. The miserable condition, in which he
must now have appeared to his enemies,
does not exempt him from their insults;
they continue to ridicule and to mock him,
calling to him repeatedly to descend from
the cross, that they might believe in him;
and reproaching him, that though he had
saved others, he could not save himself:—
yet he does not lose his wonted patience,
he does not break out into any angry re-
monstrances; on the contrary, he offers
up for them his dying prayers,—“ Father,
“ forgive them, they know not what they
“ do.” Of the two robbers, who were cru-
cified with him, one of them, unmindful
of his own melancholy situation, joined in

SERM. XIV. their derisions with the surrounding multitude; on which he was rebuked by the other, who vindicated the innocence of Jesus, and then applying to him, and claiming his favour for thus speaking for him, he received that memorable promise—
“ Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” I must not omit another interesting and moving circumstance, which occurred at this time.— Jesus seeing his mother, and John, that disciple whom he had always particularly loved, standing near the cross, anxious for her in the forlorn condition he was about to leave her (her husband being probably already dead) he said to her, looking at John,—“ Woman, behold thy son ;” and then addressing himself to John, he added, “ behold thy mother :” and John, who perfectly conceived his meaning, took her from that hour to his own house. And
now

now Jesus, knowing that all things else relating to his life on earth were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled in this also (David having foretold of him, that in his thirst they should give him vinegar to drink) he said, " I thirst," and one ran and dipped a sponge into some vinegar, put it upon a reed, and offered it to him ; and when he had received it, he said, " It is finished," i. e. " The work that
SERM.
XIV.

" I came to do is perfected ; Father, into
" thy hands I commend my spirit : " and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Many wonderful occurrences accompanied his death ; there was a preternatural darkness over the whole country for three hours, and the veil of the temple, which separated the holy of holies from the other part of it, was torn, shewing that Christ had now opened a way into the former ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks were

SERM. rent, and the graves were opened, and
XIV. many bodies of saints that slept arose, and
went into the holy city, and shewed themselves unto many after his resurrection. So many particulars have offered themselves to our notice, that I have already exceeded the bounds of a common discourse; I shall therefore only add, that nothing can be a greater persuasive to a virtuous life than the reflection on these cruel sufferings of Christ for our sakes. They shew, in the most alarming light, the heinous nature of sin, and warn us how impossible it is we should escape, if we neglect the great salvation which is offered us. But they work not on our fears alone, but on our hopes and on our gratitude. What great things must God have in store for us, if we obey him, who hath not withheld from us his only son! and if we have any generosity, how much ought it (in return

turn for this vast obligation) to be the en- SERM.
deavour of our lives to know and to serve XIV.
him, more particularly when we recollect
likewise, that in the knowledge of him
standeth our eternal life.

OF THE CONSTITUTION

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ARTICLE I
SECTION 1

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2
The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State.

SECTION 3
The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have the Qualifications requisite for Senators in that State.

SECTION 4
The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

SECTION 5
The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments, when sitting on that Business; and when the Senate is on that Business, the President of the United States shall not be present.

SECTION 6
The Senators and Representatives shall receive Compensation for their Services, which shall be ascertained from Time to Time by each House.

SECTION 7
No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the United States.

SECTION 8
The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

SECTION 9
The Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

SECTION 10
No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation with any foreign Nation, or State, or send Ambassadors, or Consuls, or other public Ministers, or receive Ambassadors, or Consuls, or other public Ministers.

SECTION 11
The Congress shall have Power to declare War, to issue Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and to grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal to privateers.

SECTION 12
The Congress shall have Power to coin Money, to regulate the Value thereof, and the Table of Weights and Measures.

SECTION 13
The Congress shall have Power to fix the Standard of Weights and Measures.

SECTION 14
The Congress shall have Power to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and to regulate the Importation of Slaves, but the Importation of Slaves shall not be prohibited by any Law until the Year 1808.

SECTION 15
The Congress shall have Power to exercise exclusive Legislation over all Districts which may be erected by the Congress, and over all Places purchased by the Congress for the Reception of Ambassadors, Consuls, or other public Ministers.

SECTION 16
The Congress shall have Power to constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court.

SECTION 17
The Congress shall have Power to make and regulate the Militia, and to provide for calling them forth to execute the Laws of the United States, to suppress Insurrections, and to repel Invasions.

SECTION 18
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SERMON XV.

THE DYING THIEF.

ST. LUKE XXIII. XLIII.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

WHEN our blessed Saviour was suspended to the cross, we are told that his dying moments were interrupted by the mockeries and insults of the surrounding multitude: of the two thieves likewise, who were crucified on each side of him, one, unmindful of his own melancholy situation, joined in their derisions with our

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SERM. Lord's other adversaries,—“ If thou be
 XV.
 “ the Christ, save thyself and us.” But
 the other rebuked him, saying, “ Doest thou
 “ not fear God, seeing thou art in the same
 “ condemnation ? and we indeed justly, for
 “ we receive the due reward of our sins ;
 “ but this man hath done nothing amiss.”
 And then addressing himself to Jesus, as
 if claiming a recompence for thus speaking
 in his vindication,—“ Lord, remember me,
 “ when thou comest into thy kingdom.”
 And Jesus said unto him, “ Verily I say
 “ unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me
 “ in Paradise.”

There are many men, who, though not
 very attentive to scripture in general, nor
 very apt to lay a stress on particular parts
 of it, yet dwell much and insist strongly on
 this story of the dying thief: they console
 themselves under their own apprehensions
 by this precedent, and endeavor to persuade
 themselves from it, that a profligate life and
 eternal

eternal salvation are by no means incompatible, provided the sinner do but cry out to his Redeemer for pardon a short time before his death. 'If,' say they, 'mercy was thus granted to the murderer and the robber, to one who had carried his iniquities to such an enormous pitch, that they had drawn down on him an ignominious death from the laws of his country; if such a flagitious person, only calling on his Saviour in his last moments, could receive the promise of Paradise, surely we may expect it on better grounds, who, though we confess that we do not altogether conform to the precepts of our religion, yet at least steer clear of those atrocious crimes which are the objects of capital punishment from human laws.' Alas! how desirous men are to deceive themselves, and how eager to seize on every circumstance which may contribute to the delusion! In the first place,

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place, the case before us is of so particular a nature, that it can never happen again; its singularity alone in a matter of such unspeakable importance, and where a mistake is irreparable destruction, ought to prevent us from laying any stress upon it. The redemption of the universe was at this instant accomplishing by the death of the Son of God himself! Surely, when mercy on so extensive and magnificent a plan was working to the whole of mankind, no general conclusion can be drawn from a particular act of grace, which was vouchsafed to an individual, a partaker of the same sufferings with the Lord of life, and who in that dreadful extremity, when all others were either insulting or forsaking him, openly acknowledged his faith and reliance upon him:—"Lord, remember me, "when thou comest into thy kingdom!" Surely, what happened at such an extraordinary juncture, affords no argument of the

the efficacy of a dying repentance in general, even though we were certain that this favoured malefactor had never repented of his sins, and acknowledged his Redeemer before. But this is by no means so clear; it is very possible, that of whatever enormities this poor penitent might formerly have been guilty, his repentance might have been begun some time before his punishment, and there are circumstances in the story which render it very probable.— It is not unusual, you know, for some considerable portion of time to intervene between the commission of a crime, and the infliction of punishment; even if the culprit be apprehended immediately, it may be some time before he is brought to a trial, and some time after that before his sentence be executed. It does not, I fear, happen very often, but yet it certainly does in some instances, that the gloom of a prison, the apprehensions of impending punish-

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punishment, the time allowed for thought and reflection, the removal from the usual objects of temptation, and the separation from vicious companions, produce in those not entirely hardened, a conviction of the folly and danger of their past evil ways, and a sincere resolution of forsaking them.

Who can tell but that this might be the case with the person whose story we are now considering! As I observed above, it is possible, and if it should be true, all consolation drawn from this example, as to the efficacy of a dying repentance, falls immediately to the ground: but still farther, that his conversion was of some standing, there are, as I remarked above, circumstances in the story which render it likewise probable. He certainly had a proper sense of his own guilt, and of the justice of his punishment; nor was he backward to acknowledge both. "Doest thou not," said he to his fellow-sufferer,

"fear

“fear God, seeing thou art in the same SERM.
“condemnation? and we indeed justly, XV.
“for we receive the due reward of our
“deeds.”

Now this consciousness of having acted wrong, and this readiness to acknowledge that he merited what he was suffering, clearly shew that he was not an hardened sinner; and though they do not amount to an absolute proof, yet they certainly afford grounds for believing, that he was sincerely sorry for what he had done, and that if his life had been given him, he would no more have returned to his wickedness. But I have still more to say in his favour: however flagitious his former life might have been, it seems not improbable that he was now become almost, if not altogether, a Christian. That he was acquainted with some parts of our Saviour's history, and believed him to be a divine personage, is certain: in his rebuke to the other thief he

SERM. he vindicates our Lord's innocence:—

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“ We indeed receive the due rewards of
“ our deeds ; but this man hath done no
“ thing amiss.” He likewise knew some-
thing of the nature of our Saviour's king-
dom, and appears to have been fully per-
suaded of the authority which Christ was
going to assume :—“ Lord, remember me
“ when thou comest into thy kingdom ! ”

Here you have a most remarkable in-
stance of the exercise of that virtue, which
is in the sight of God of such high price,
and which is so much insisted on in the
character of a Christian faith ! The com-
bination against our Lord was now uni-
versal ; his divine instructions and won-
derful actions seemed to be entirely for-
gotten, and with whatever majesty and su-
periority he might once have appeared in-
vested, he was now evidently (as it seemed
to human eyes) unequal to the power of
his enemies.

The

The Jewish nobles and high priests accused him ; the Roman magistrates condemned him ; the people, once his adherents, reviled him, and his own particular disciples forsook him : yet was this penitent malefactor so far from joining in the general cry, even though he saw Jesus suffering the same ignominious death with himself, that he confidently testifies his conviction of his being a divine person, and lays claim to his remembrance, when he should be arrived in his kingdom.— Such a high degree of faith as this can scarce be supposed to have been infused into a sinner in an instant ; it is a presumptive evidence that his conversion was of some standing, and warrants us in the conjecture, that the reflection and information, for which his confinement had given opportunity, had persuaded him of the truth of our Saviour's mission, and the excellency of the religion which he taught.

But

SERM. But to what does all this tend?—to this
XV.

important caution, that we draw no conclusion that a death-bed repentance will avail us, from this story of the forgiveness of the dying thief! You see there is great reason to believe that his penitence had commenced long before this late hour; and therefore his case is entirely different from that of those who persist in their sins till they can practise them no longer, and then flatter themselves, that if with him they call out in their last moments on their Saviour, with him they shall obtain admission into Paradise.

But though we were sure that he had never been brought to reflection before, that his conversion was instantaneous, and began not until he was nailed to the cross, I do not see what presumption the salvation of one sinner affords of the general pardonable nature of wickedness continued until death. At the best, the instance is
single,

single, and therefore at any rate ought not to be built on. What should we say of a man, who threw himself from a lofty precipice, because he had heard of one person, who had fallen before him, and escaped without injury! Should we not justly conclude, that his brains were distempered? And does not his rashness, who ventures to persist in his sins till death, because he imagines one person has done so before him, and yet obtained salvation, subject him to the like imputation of extreme folly and madness? But dismissing this story, let us examine what ground we have from scripture and reason to rely on the efficacy of a death-bed repentance. But first, I will take for granted for a moment, no matter how improbably, that however wickedly we may have lived, if we have a little warning before we die, and express our sorrow for what is past, and ask forgiveness, all will be well: supposing even

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SERM. this to be the case, and that a very little
XV. time were sufficient, let it be remembered
that of this little we are by no means certain; the instances are not rare of persons cut off in a moment, in the midst of the highest health, and with the fairest prospect of a long life; so that, even in this view, it would be the extremity of folly to venture the happiness of endless ages on so desperate a stake as the continuance of human life.

But this supposition is wide of the truth. In vain shall we die the death of the righteous, if we are not willing to lead his life; in vain, when we have neglected all our days to obey the commandments of our Saviour, shall we cry out—"Lord, Lord," at the last! Without holiness, we are assured, that no man shall see God. Is the acquisition of holiness the work of a moment? of a moment too, which fear, anguish, and not unfrequently distraction, entirely

entirely occupy ! “ What shall I do,” said SERM.
the lawyer to our Saviour, “ to inherit eter- XV.
“ nal life ? ” “ Thou shalt love the Lord
“ thy God with all thy heart, and with
“ all thy soul, and with all thy strength,
“ and with all thy mind ; and thy neigh-
“ bour as thyself.” Shall he, whose whole
life has been a constant violation of these
precepts, think to atone for his disobe-
dience by a few unprofitable sighs and
tears at the last ? This world is a state
of trial ; during our abode in it we are to
prepare ourselves for another, in which we
shall afterwards be placed : it is here we
are to acquire such dispositions and habits
as will determine our lot hereafter. We
know that our future condition depends on
our behaviour now ; if we neglect it, it is
at our own peril ; nor is it, when the time
assigned for our trial is at the eve of ex-
piring, that by lamenting we can retrieve
our misconduct. We have omitted to ac-

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quire such habits as can alone fit us for heaven, and, indeed, without which we could have no relish for its enjoyment : so that unless a miracle were wrought in our favour, which we have no reason to expect, we must necessarily be doomed to endless misery. The nature of repentance, therefore, has been much mistaken : it consists not only in grieving for our past sins, but in having for some time forsaken them ; not only in entreating God's forgiveness for having learned evil habits, but in having laid them entirely aside, and substituted virtuous ones in their room. This is a great work, and cannot be done in a moment, and more particularly at such a moment, when we are scarce equal to any work at all. Far be it from the minister of the gospel to pronounce peremptorily in all cases against the efficacy of a death-bed repentance ; and still farther be it from him to dissuade those, who have never
thought

thought of it before that awful period, from SERM.
having recourse to it then! It is all that XV.
is left for them: they must therefore do
what they can. But he would be wanting
in his duty, if he did not tell you that the
case is infinitely hazardous; that no de-
pendance is to be placed upon it; and from
thence to warn you to do what you know
to be of such inexpressible importance,
during the time that you can call your
own, while you are in health and strength,
“ before the Lord your God cause dark-
“ ness, and before your feet stumble upon
“ the dark mountains, and while ye look
“ for light, he turn it into the shadow of
“ death, and make it gross darkness.”

The first of these is the fact that the
 country is not yet settled. It is still
 in the hands of the Indians, and the
 white man is not yet able to take
 possession of it. The second is the
 fact that the country is not yet
 settled. It is still in the hands of
 the Indians, and the white man is
 not yet able to take possession of
 it. The third is the fact that the
 country is not yet settled. It is still
 in the hands of the Indians, and the
 white man is not yet able to take
 possession of it.

SERMON XVI.

ON THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

PREACHED ON WHIT-SUNDAY.

ACTS II. I, II, III, IV.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

THIS day is appointed by our church to SERM.
XVI.
be kept holy, in remembrance of the miraculous circumstance related in the text, the descent of the Holy Ghost in the shape of cloven tongues, like as of fire, on the heads of the apostles, and their being en-

SERM. abled thereby to discourse in languages
XVI. which they had never learned. This happened on the day called by the Jews Pentecost, that is, fiftieth, because it was the fiftieth day from their celebration of the feast of the passover. This Pentecost, likewise, was one of their great feasts on which they offered the first fruits of the productions of the earth, then newly gathered in; and they commemorated, likewise, the deliverance of their law to them from Mount Sinai. The day has obtained, among Christians, the name of Whit or White Sunday, either from the splendour which accompanied the descent of the Holy Ghost on this occasion, or from the custom of the early converts to Christianity being baptized at this time, and wearing (as tokens of the purity which they promised to maintain) white garments.

If we consider the miracle described in the text, in itself, it is of all miracles the
most

most extraordinary; if we consider it in SERM.
its effects, it is the most important. Let XVI.
us take a more exact view of it. 

Fifty days after the resurrection of their Lord, and ten after his ascension, his twelve constant companions, called apostles, were met together in one place, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and they sat upon each of them: these cloven or divided tongues were to represent the various languages, which from henceforth the apostles would be able to speak, and their sitting upon *each of them* was a mark of this great gift being communicated to them all; possibly their being like unto fire was to signify the great efficacy of those powers of preaching which they were meant to bestow; their *sitting* upon the apostles is thought to signify permanency or continuance, to shew that
the

SERM. the gift of tongues was not like several
XVI. other miraculous powers which did not
constantly reside with them, but that they
were to have the perpetual and uninterrupted
use of it, because in their spreading
the gospel among foreign nations they
would have perpetual occasion for it. And
they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,
and began to speak with other tongues as
the Spirit gave them utterance; they were
immediately enabled to converse and preach
in other languages besides their own mother
tongue, languages which they had never
learned nor had any knowledge of before.
There have been some who have thought
that this miracle was not in the speakers
but in the hearers, that is, that the apostles
spoke in their own language, and that all
those nations who were assembled together
at this time heard them in theirs;—for
this conceit there seems to be no ground;
it is very contrary to the whole story of this

mi-

miraculous event, and to several particular circumstances of it: it is said, in the scriptures, those on whom the fiery tongues settled, began to speak with *other* tongues; but how can this be true, if they continued to speak with their own in reality, but were only understood as speaking with others? It is said also, they were accused by some of their hearers of drunkenness; and why? not surely because their countrymen still heard them talking in the language in which they had been educated, which would have been the case on the supposition above; but because they were seen and heard addressing foreigners, where those who knew them, and were sensible that they never studied any foreign tongues, were likely enough to conclude that they were only uttering unmeaning sounds, and consequently that they were not in their right minds. Besides, among the signs which our Saviour, before his ascension, pro-

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SERM.

XVI.

promised should follow those that believed, was this,—“ They shall speak with new “ tongues;” and St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, mentions “ diversity of “ tongues,” among the gifts bestowed on the church. Others have thought that the apostles spoke various languages at the same time, and that a Jew heard them speaking in the Jewish, a Mede in the Median, and a Parthian in the Parthian language, all at once; but this is scarcely, if at all, possible, and the supposition is quite unnecessary : it was sufficient for the purpose, if the apostles were able, when they wanted to teach the truths of Christianity to any person, to speak to him in his own tongue. This they were enabled to do in a moment, and it is the greatest of all miracles : it is of a nature which was never experienced before the times of the first publishing of Christianity, nor has it ever been heard of since ; nor can we imagine any which would have

have a greater effect in exciting wonder and admiration at the divine power and goodness. Our Saviour appears to have reckoned this the greatest of miracles, and therefore to have reserved it for an instance of the power with which he was endued after his ascension to the right hand of God: the declaration and promise, made to his apostles a little before his departure from them, seems to allude to it—
“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that
“ believeth on me, the works that I do
“ shall he do also; and greater works
“ than these shall he do, because I go unto
“ my Father.” And what could these greater works be? Our Saviour had made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk; he had fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes; he had stilled the raging of the seas and winds with a word; he had cast out devils; he had raised the dead. Now what miracle could possibly be
greater

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greater than these? even that which we are now considering—"unlearned men, who before knew no tongue but their own, being able in a moment to speak fluently all the different languages of the earth." Unless by *greater* works our Saviour meant *this*, what did he mean? what else is there that himself did not do, which was done by his apostles? *This* we are never told that he *did*, which if it had been so, we certainly should have been; but *this* he conferred on his disciples: it was the first sensible effect of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, after that he was gone to his Father. If we consider the matter, we shall perceive, likewise, that in this miracle deceit or imposition was impossible: the apostles were well known at Jerusalem (where it happened) to be unlearned men, sprung from low parents, and themselves brought up to low employments; they never could have had the lei-

sure

sure or the means of studying these various languages of which they now all at once appeared to be such complete masters: if they had been strangers newly arrived from some distant part of the world, it might have been said that they had attained this proficiency in languages by hard study, but as they had always been on the spot, it is evident that this wonderful power must have been supernaturally conferred upon them. Add to this, that the Jews were very great *enemies* to them; and if it had been possible to have proved any imposition upon them, they would have been glad enough to have done it. Add, also, that the miracle was publicly wrought at the time, before great multitudes of various nations, and that it continued afterwards still to be wrought during the respective lives of the apostles; wherever they travelled, they were able to preach the gospel in the languages of the people amongst

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amongst whom they were. And though it may be said that these nations, which were strangers to them, had not such clear proof that their ability of speaking various languages was given them from above, as their own countrymen had, yet they had certainly sufficient proof to induce them to believe it. The apostles asserted that the gift of tongues was supernatural; and they had a right to be credited, because the other miracles which they performed, such as the cure of diseases, and the raising of the dead, were as much out of the course of nature as this to which they pretended: the one, therefore, was a confirmation of the other.

This miracle, immediately on the spot and at the time, was followed by the most wonderful effects; so glaring was the evidence which it offered in favour of the truth of Christianity, that, after the sermon which St. Peter preached on the occasion,

casion, the people “gladly received his SERM.
XVI.
“word and were baptized, and the same
“day there were added unto them about
“three thousand souls.” This was a large
portion of first fruits, a great earnest of
that spiritual harvest which the apostles
had begun to reap, of which the first fruits
of the productions of the earth, offered at
this very time by the Jews, were a repre-
sentation. Nor was the utility of the gift,
conferred on the apostles, less conspicuous
afterwards; the thing, indeed, speaks for
itself. The last orders of Jesus Christ
were—“Go ye and teach all nations, bap-
“tizing them in the name of the Father,
“and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,
“teaching them to observe all things what-
“soever I have commanded you.” How
were these orders to be fulfilled without a
previous knowledge of the tongues of the
nations whom these missionaries were to
address?—and how slow, very slow, must

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have been the progress of the gospel if they had been left to acquire these tongues by the usual methods. On the contrary, with this assistance, its progress was rapid beyond imagination; within the period of forty years, from the death of Christ, it had been preached and had obtained some footing in every considerable country of the then known world.

Let us, then, now, and at all times, entertain the highest gratitude towards God, for this stupendous instance of his desire that all nations and kindreds should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved; let us resolve to make the most we are able of this benevolent distribution of divine truth: let us pray to God that as his Holy Spirit at the first opening of Christianity gave such extraordinary power to the apostles for our conversion, so he may continue the same blessed work by taking up his abode with each and all of us,

us, by illuminating our understandings and purifying our hearts, that we may have a true perception of every thing which it concerns us to know, and may resolutely and uninterruptedly continue in the practice of it.

SERM.

XVI.

the following are the names of the persons who have been

buried in the cemetery since the year 1841.

The first person buried in the cemetery was

John O'Neil, who died on the 1st of January 1841.

He was the first person buried in the cemetery.

He was the first person buried in the cemetery.

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He was the first person buried in the cemetery.

SERMON XVII.

THE DUTY OF TAKING UP OUR CROSS FOR
CHRIST'S SAKE.

ST. MATTHEW XVI. XXIV.

*Then Jesus said unto his disciples, If any
man will come after me, let him deny him-
self, and take up his cross and follow me.*

TOWARDS the conclusion of our Saviour's SERM.
XVII.
ministry, having nearly perfected the work
which he was sent upon earth to perform,
he thought it necessary to give his dis-
ciples some account of the sufferings and
death which he was about to undergo.—
Having done that, having told them what

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he was to endure for their sakes, he takes the same opportunity of informing them what he should expect from them for *his*:—

“ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” That is, if any man will be my disciple, if he will entitle himself to the merits of my death, and to the glorious rewards I have promised, he must have the resolution to forego every pleasure, and to endure every pain, nay even to lay down his life itself, whenever his religion demands it of him.

Of all seasons which could have been chosen for inculcating this difficult and unpalatable lesson, that certainly was the most proper when he had just been speaking of what were to be his own sufferings. If his followers had any generosity, if they had any gratitude, they could not repine at completing for themselves what their benevolent master was going to begin for them;

them; they could not think it much to lay down their own lives to save their own souls, when their Redeemer, without any other motive but their interest, was about to set them so noble an example. SERM.
XVII.

This duty of self-denial, and suffering for Christ's sake, was not only binding upon those to whom it was immediately taught, but is also incumbent upon all the followers of Jesus of every age. And though all are not called upon to practise them in so particular a manner, to pass through such fiery trials for the sake of their Redeemer, to brave death in such various and terrible shapes as the first Christians were, and as others, in after-ages, have been, yet all will meet with sufficient occasions to try their virtue, sufficient temptations to exercise their resolution; or, in other words, they will find their religion and their inclination so frequently at variance, as to give ample scope

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XVII.

for the display of whatever hold the love of their Redeemer may have taken of their hearts. This duty of self-denial has been much mistaken; some have placed it in a gloomy refusal of every thing which could give pleasure to the senses, in an absolute retirement from the world, in rigorous fastings, in voluntary penances and mortifications; but this is not the sort of self-denial which our Saviour intended to recommend:—he meant not to enjoin an abstinence from lawful, but from unlawful gratifications:—he meant not to forbid the indulgence of innocent pleasures, but of such as are in their nature guilty, or in their tendency lead to guilt. Nor are we obliged to endure any sufferings which we can avoid, provided our escape from them be not purchased at the expence of virtue.

Temporary retirement indeed, and moderate fasting, have their uses; the one gives leisure for recollection and examination

nation of our lives, and fits us for acting our parts in the world with greater consistency and rectitude; while the other, by allaying the violence of passion, places worldly objects in their right point of view: but neither of them are meritorious or requisite in themselves, but merely from the effects which may be expected from them. The moderate enjoyment of those pleasures which neither religion nor morality prohibit, by which neither the commands of God are infringed, nor the concerns of our neighbour injured, is perhaps the most acceptable method of shewing our gratitude to the bounteous giver; but when the things of this world and the next come in competition, when our interest points one way and our duty another, then it is that to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and follow the example of our Redeemer, becomes indispensable: we must forego our dearest delight, give up
our

SERM.
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our most favourite possession, undertake any labour, endure any pain, meet death itself in its most terrible shape, if our religion requires it of us. In the language of the scripture, "We must pluck out an eye, or cut off an hand, if they bring our salvation into danger; for it is better to enter maimed or blind into life, rather than having two eyes or two hands to be cast into everlasting fire."

To be more particular: suppose a man is offered some emolument upon certain conditions, which religion, virtue, and his own conscience condemn; suppose him in great distress, and that this emolument would entirely extricate him, make him happy himself, and enable him to provide amply for his family, otherwise destitute; what must he, what ought he to do? if he is a Christian, if he means that his Saviour shall not have died for him in vain, he must deny himself, he must be content to
continue

continue poor, to leave his family unprovided for, to commit himself to him, who judgeth righteously, and his reward shall be great in heaven.

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Suppose, again, that a man has a friend, who is as dear to him as life itself, whose friendship to him has been tried on various occasions, without whom from long use he knows not how to live; suppose this friend, however faithful and just to him, to be an infidel, or a libertine, and that he is in danger from the constant intercourse which subsists between them of having his principles perverted, and his morals depraved; what conduct should he observe? he may, he ought to, try all means to reclaim his unhappy friend, but those failing, and finding himself perpetually drawn in by bad company and conversation to do what his conscience condemns, he must, hard as will be the struggle, give up his other self, he must break off the friendship, or
be

SER M. be content to renounce the favour of a still
XVII. nearer friend, his Mediator and Redeemer.

These are two instances, out of a multitude which might be mentioned, where great self-denial is necessary; they may serve to shew what is its true nature. And here I must observe, that there is nothing unexpected in these sacrifices, which are demanded of us; — our Saviour has not deceived us: he told his first disciples that there were no worldly advantages to be expected from the profession of his religion; but, on the contrary, that it would expose them to various dangers and sundry kinds of deaths; and he likewise gave many intimations of the difficulties through which Christians, in all ages, were to make their way to happiness and immortality. Nor is there any thing unreasonable in them; Christ, the captain of our salvation, went before us—he shewed us the way, through sufferings and death, to life and
to

to glory—he endured the cross, and despised the shame, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. He has likewise promised us all needful assistance in our trials: if, therefore, we sincerely endeavour, we may be sure that we shall pass through them victorious: but, above all, he hath held forth to us a most glorious reward for our toils—an happy eternity—passed in the presence of God—a reward which ought to make us count all earthly sufferings as nothing—‘but as a drop of a bucket, but as the small dust of the balance.’

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Since, then, self-denial is a duty which is required of all Christians, since it is nothing unreasonable in itself, and what we may all expect to be called upon to exercise, we ought to hold ourselves in continual preparation for it; we ought so to discipline our minds as to have them always ready to give up, with cheerfulness, every pleasure

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XVII.

sure or advantage which is incompatible with our religion, and to submit with fortitude to every loss or pain which that exacts from us. If we are called on to surrender riches, or to encounter poverty and want, let us consider him who, being Lord of all, had not where to lay his head; who, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. If it should happen that we are persecuted for adhering to what our conscience tells us to be right, let us remember and be consoled by our master's benediction—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven!" To put a still more extreme case, if it should be our lot to be exposed to death itself, for righteousness sake, let us meet it with readiness rather than

than part with our integrity; its pangs SERM.
XVII.
can be but momentary, and, these once
over, we shall shine as the stars in the
firmament, for ever and ever. And here
it is not out of place to observe, that if a
Christian withstand all the trials which
he meets with, if he deny himself in all
the instances in which his virtue is put to
the test, he does every thing which is re-
quired of him, and he is not to vex him-
self with scruples of what might have
been his falling off if such and such perils
had assailed him: I mention this, because
I believe it is not uncommon for devout
persons of a melancholy temper, when
they read or hear of the terrible tortures
which the first martyrs to our religion
underwent, and shrink with horror and dis-
may at the idea of them, it is not, I believe,
uncommon for them to harrass themselves
with apprehensions that, if such trials
had fallen to their lot, they should not
have

SERM. have had sufficient fortitude to preserve
 XVII. their faith inviolate.

In resisting all the temptations which surround us, in combating our vicious inclinations and subduing our evil passions, there is, even in these days, sufficient employment for the firmest faith; and he who passes through the world blameless now, has no reason to doubt his resolution if he had fallen on more turbulent times. If, however, he thinks that nothing but extraordinary assistance could possibly carry him through such extraordinary trials, he has every reason to suppose that such, if necessary, would be granted; "for God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it."

Let us however all be grateful, that we have not been, and are not likely to be, called to such severe and hazardous proofs of our
 faith;

faith; let us not think it much to practise **SERM.**
self-denial in small matters, when we are **XVII.**
excused from it in matters of so much
importance; let us not repine at suffering
any losses or afflictions to which our in-
tegrity may expose us, when we remember
what the noble army of martyrs have en-
dured in the same cause; let us carry
them and their pious fortitude in our eye,
and though the necessity, through God's
favour, of following them in the heroism
of their deaths be now no more, we have it
yet in our power to imitate them in the
purity of their lives; and, if we exert this
power according to the best of our abilities,
we shall, together with them and the other
blessed saints, be removed to that state,
where self-denial shall be no more, where,
having suffered with Christ on earth, we
shall reign with him in heaven, where our
happiness, as is frequently the case here,

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shall

SERM. shall not arise from the suppression, but
XVII. from the full and complete enjoyment, of
all that we wish and desire.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

ST. LUKE X. XLII.

One thing is needful.

THE great use of true wisdom, is to teach SERM.
XVIII.
us to set that value upon the different things
before us which their real importance demands. The truly wise man considers what will most conduce to his happiness; and, when he discovers what it is, steadily pursues it: nor does he suffer any thing to divert him materially from the pursuit.

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XVIII.

We are told, in the text, that one thing is needful;—the assertion is conceived in short terms, which, when more fully explained, signify—that there is one thing of such infinitely great consequence that all others are, comparatively, of none at all. In this discourse, I shall first endeavour to shew what this one thing is; and, secondly, what are the inducements to attend to it.—What this one thing is, may be discovered by considering by whom, and on what occasion, these words were spoken. The speaker was our Saviour—the occasion, this:—In his progress about the country, instructing the minds and healing the bodies of men, our Lord arrives at a certain village, and enters the house of two pious sisters, Martha and Mary; the one of these, Martha, entirely employed herself in making preparations for the entertainment of their illustrious guest; while the other, Mary, sat at Jesus' feet, and listened attentively

tentively to his instructions. The former, SERM.
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vexed that the whole business of the house
fell on her, called out to our Saviour, com-
plaining of her sister's apparent idleness,
and requested that he would order her to
come and assist; but Jesus answered—
“ Martha, Martha, thou art careful and
“ troubled about many things; but one
“ thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen
“ that good part, which shall not be taken
“ away from her.” The employment,
therefore, of Mary, was the one thing
needful; and that was—listening to the
words of the divine teacher, doubtless with
a sincere purpose of following his instruc-
tions; she was learning the way of life;
or, in other words, she was taking care
of her eternal salvation.

This, then, is the one thing needful—the
care of our eternal salvation; and, in com-
parison with this, every thing else is of no
importance. In what then does this care

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of our salvation consist?—what conduct must we observe to attain it?—what must we do to be saved?—We must, with Mary, be earnestly attentive to know what our duty is, and, when known, we must be resolutely disposed to practise it. The knowledge of their duty may be easily attained by all men; the scriptures are open to every one; in them are contained the conditions on which we may claim eternal life; in them all the virtues which we are to cultivate, and all the sins which we are to avoid, are enumerated: the commandments of God are there laid down in so plain and simple a manner, that we cannot mistake them, except by design; we have but sincerely to endeavour, and we shall be sure to understand them.

But here, perhaps, it may be said that, for want of education, these scriptures are in a degree shut up from not a few among you,—you would be willing to study them,
but

but you have it not in your power; this is certainly a misfortune, but it is not without remedy:—for the instruction of the unlearned in their duty, and for confirming those in it to whom it is already known, one day in every week is dedicated to the service of religion:—as the sabbath returns, all have an opportunity of assembling together at least once in the day to worship their God, to hear the holy scriptures read, and to have explained and enforced upon them some Christian grace or moral virtue.

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With this advantage, added to what their own conscience tells them of what is right and wrong, none need be ignorant of what it so much concerns them to know; none need ever to be in doubt what they ought to do, or what to avoid, in order to the obtaining of the kingdom of heaven.

But then it is necessary that a proper use of this advantage should be made—that

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we should suffer nothing to prevent us from assembling together as often as the sabbath returns, and when we are assembled, that we should dismiss all thoughts of worldly affairs from our minds, and be seriously and earnestly attentive to what we are about. I am not unacquainted with the excuse with which some of you satisfy yourselves in the neglect of this important duty;—some say, they have been working hard six days in the week, and stand in need of rest on the seventh.

But what! is there any labour in coming to church? in kneeling for a short time, worshipping our Maker, and to sit for a still shorter, listening to his holy word? Is there any labour in returning thanks for his kindness during the past week, and in begging a continuance of it in future?—You spend six days in the week, and very properly do you spend them, in providing for yourselves and your families; and will
you

you not spend a small part of one day in providing for your eternal salvation?—

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What folly is this! The things of this world are but of short continuance,—those of the next are for ever and ever! It is as if a man should be extremely industrious to make himself happy for a single minute, and be entirely indifferent as to what became of him the rest of his life. Let us not, for shame, make this excuse, and be too idle to spend one hour in the worshipping God on a day which is particularly, both by religion and the laws of our country, dedicated to his service. Others pretend they cannot assist at the morning service, they are so much taken up with their household affairs;—such was not the conduct of Mary, which received the commendations of our Redeemer; she neglected even to assist in preparing for the entertainment of so divine a guest; she preferred listening to his instructions, and chose, as our Lord said,

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XVIII.

saïd, that good part, which should not be taken from her. But, allowing the justice of this excuse, that some care must be taken of household affairs, and that it is impossible this should not break in upon your attendance at church, surely, when you consider how short is the time which you are detained there, one in a family might be sufficient to answer these household concerns, and the remainder might by turns employ themselves in serving their Maker. I speak this in general; it will not perhaps suit all cases; but I leave it to each man's conscience to tell him whether the excuse, on which he absents himself from public worship, be a just one.

I will dismiss this subject with one caution—that none of you stay away from church, on the supposition that you do yourselves no service by coming thither; your devotion, perhaps, you have found to be cold, your thoughts will wander to worldly

worldly affairs, you do not hear, or you do not understand the preacher; but be not discouraged, come again and again; endeavour to be devout, and strive to be instructed, and it may, nay it *will*, please God, that by degrees your understandings will be enlightened, and your hearts corrected and improved; and if it should, how cheaply, with only one hour in seven days, will you have acquired the wisdom which is unto salvation!

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To proceed; we will suppose then that a man knows his duty; it remains, to make his future condition happy, that he add, to his knowledge, practice;—for knowledge without practice, and faith without works, are of no value. “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” In order then, to the effectually securing the one thing needful, we must live in the habitual and constant performance of all those graces and virtues which

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which the voice of our own consciences, the perusal of the holy scriptures, the exhortation of our spiritual instructors, the advice of our pious friends, convince us to be absolutely necessary. Our devotion to God must not only be hearty, but regular; it must not be by fits and starts, and only when the humour is upon us (for the most abandoned, I suppose, are devout sometimes) it must not be confined to the moments of affliction, danger, sickness, and terror; it must not only be at the approach of the hour of death, and under apprehensions of the day of judgment, but in the seasons of health also, and prosperity; it must be constant and unremitted in all times, and under all circumstances. I am the more particular in dwelling on this regularity of devotion, because I fear there is no mistake into which we are more apt to fall, than that of thinking a few single fits of piety, at different times of our lives,

lives, will confer on us the character of good Christians, and recommend us to the acceptance of God:—it is not so, it is the habit of piety which is alone valuable, it is the habit which alone denotes the principle; and without it we may certainly conclude, that the virtue has taken no root in our hearts. Let us then cultivate this habit of piety; let us never omit, on slight objections, to join with our brethren in public worship; and let us also be equally constant in our own private devotions; let no hurry of business, no call of pleasure, prevail on us to neglect them: we may not at first be sensible of the benefit, but our hearts by degrees will be softened, and our prayers will be registered in heaven against that day, when we shall be amply convinced of our prudence and wisdom, in having taken care of the one thing needful. But, besides this performance of our duty towards God, there is, in order to
our

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our attainment of the kingdom of heaven, a duty towards our neighbour also to perform. This duty is briefly summed up in that most excellent and comprehensive precept—"Thou shalt do unto others, as thou wouldest they should do unto thee." The time will not admit that I should enter into an explanation of this rule, but it is of so simple a nature that it is the less necessary; and though some difficulties are pretended about it, yet I will venture to say that a man's own conscience is the best interpreter of it, and will almost universally tell him when he observes, and when he transgresses it.

Let us then be attentive, in all our concerns with our neighbour, to this rule; let us ever carry it in our eye, for without it all our piety to God will avail us nothing; whatever prayers and praises, and however often we may put them up to the throne of grace, we shall become but as sounding
brass

brass and tinkling cymbals; and at the last great day we shall find, to our cost, that we have neglected an essential part of the one thing needful. SERM.
XVIII.

Having thus shown that this one thing needful is the care of our eternal salvation, and that this care consists in being hearty, regular, and constant, both in our public and private devotions, and also in observing towards our neighbour, in all our concerns with him, that conduct which we would wish him to observe towards us, I now proceed, in the second place, to show what are the inducements to attend to it;—they are seen at the first view. By attending to the one thing needful, we shall be for ever happy;—by neglecting it, we shall be for ever miserable. Words to this effect we hear so often repeated, from our very infancy, that, from being so very common to us, they do not make that impression which their strict truth and great awful-

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XVIII.

awfulness demand: all profess to believe them, yet how little weight do they obtain on the lives of many! The truth is, that we do not allow them due consideration; we do not bring them home to us, either deeply or frequently enough; we coldly admit them as speculative truths, but forget how essentially we ourselves are interested in them:—would it else be possible that any pleasures, riches, or honours, which can only endure three or four-score years, the length of the longest life, should ever tempt us to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and hazard an eternity of misery! The wisest man, and he who had apparently the greatest means of happiness, and who had experienced all sorts of the pleasures of this life, confessed that—all was vanity and vexation of spirit! But if it were not so, if a man could be really blest in this world, yet what proportion does a few paltry years hold with an eternity? If the
riches

riches or honours, which are purchased by fraud or guilt, were to be enjoyed for ever, SERM.
XVIII.

we should not so very much wonder that men scruple neither fraud nor guilt to obtain them; but when, for aught we know, they may be taken away the next moment, and, at the longest, will certainly not remain many years,—and when, instantly on leaving them, the sinner will be called to a strict account for the manner in which they were obtained, and everlastingly punished, if it were by unrighteous means,—what name, but madness, can we give to such conduct! But, alas! the plea of madness will not be allowed: men know, or at least might know, what they ought to do and what avoid, and they have the power of choosing between them;—life and death are before them—and if they will, with their eyes open, voluntarily prefer the latter, the consequences of their absurd choice will justly fall on their own heads.

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I cannot, I think, conclude this discourse better, than by calling to your minds, and setting before you, that great day, arrayed as it is in scripture with awfulness and terror, which those, who have taken care of the one thing needful, will meet with as much tranquility and confidence as those, who have neglected it, will with shame and consternation.—“ The day of the Lord
“ will come, in the which the heavens
“ shall pass away with a great noise, and
“ the elements shall melt with fervent
“ heat; the earth also, and all the works
“ that are therein, shall be burnt up; the
“ sun shall be darkened, and the moon
“ turned into blood, and all the powers of
“ heaven shaken:—then shall the Son of
“ Man come in his glory, and all the holy
“ angels with him; and he shall sit upon
“ the throne of his glory; before him shall
“ be gathered all the nations of the earth;
“ and he shall separate them one from
“ another as a shepherd divides his sheep
“ from

" from his goats, and he shall set the
" sheep on his right hand and the goats SERM.
XVIII.
" on his left; and he shall say to them on
" his right hand—Come, ye blessed of my
" Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
" you from the foundation of the world.
" And he shall say unto them on his left
" hand—Depart from me ye cursed into
" everlasting fire, prepared for the devil
" and his angels; and these shall go into
" everlasting punishment, but the righteous
" into life eternal."

With this description I rest my cause,
as I am well convinced, that whoever gives
himself time to consider it, however he
may be prompted by passion to deny, will
be forced by reason to confess, that the care
of his salvation is the one thing, which is
solely and exclusively needful.

"From his point, and the earth and sea
 "shook on the right hand and the left
 "on the left; and he shall say to them
 "his right hand—Come, ye blessed of my
 "Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
 "you from the foundation of the world.
 "And he shall say also to them on the left
 "hand—Depart from me, ye cursed, into
 "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil
 "and his angels; and there shall we go
 "everlasting punishment, but the righteous
 "into life eternal."
 "With this description I have now
 "said and well convinced that whoever gives
 "himself time to consider the power of
 "may be provoked to go to heaven or
 "be forced by reason to confess that the
 "of his salvation is the only way to
 "eternity and exclusively his own."

SERMON XIX.

FIRST PART.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE SICK.

ISAIAH XXXVIII. LATTER PART OF V. 1.

*Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die,
and not live.*

It is appointed to all men once to die; SERM.
XIX.
death is the only passage from this world
to the next. This awful event is usually
preceded by a course of sickness, of longer
or shorter continuance; and during this
sickness we are called on to the practice
of some particular duties, the principal of

SERM. which I shall endeavour to point out in this

XIX.

discourse. These duties are partly temporal, partly spiritual; some of them relate to our concerns in this world, and have for their object our fellow-creature; some relate to the state to which we are going, and have for their object God, and the salvation of our souls.

I shall treat, in the first place, of those temporal duties which it is necessary that the sick man should fulfill. Now many of these to a certain degree, and some altogether, should be performed during health; but as the generality of mankind are too apt to neglect them at that season, it becomes the more highly requisite that they should make all the amends in their power, when they perceive their end approaching. The first of these duties is justice; under which is comprehended the payment of our debts, the disposal of the remainder of our fortune, and the intreating pardon, and making

making all the atonement which we are able to those whom we are conscious that we have injured. SERM.
XIX.

No debts should be contracted at any time, which there is the slightest chance that we may not be able to pay. It is not allowable for us to reckon with certainty upon living to such a period, and going in debt on the strength of that expectation, when we are conscious, that if we die before, our creditors will lose by having trusted us. I will suppose, therefore, that when a person comes to be attacked with a dangerous disease, he is, as he ought to be, fully able to answer all demands upon him.

—One of the first things, then, which he should do, is to discharge these demands, and where this is impossible to be done on the instant, to take all proper measures to secure their being discharged with expedition. If there are any debts, which are only known to himself and the party to whom

SERM.
XIX.

they are due, he ought to take instant care to acknowledge them before impartial and respectable witnesses. To restore to his neighbour what he has wronged him of, is another duty of the sick man. This, indeed, ought to have been done in health, and how far it will avail at the close of life, it would be great presumption to determine; however, if it has been neglected before, it is the more highly necessary to have recourse to it then; it is all that is left for us, and there can be no hope of God's favour without it, it may possibly be attended with great difficulty; but if men will do amiss, they must take the consequences of their wickedness; — the difficulty of making amends must not deter them from trying to do it, and if they are at a loss to know how themselves, they must take the advice of sensible and honest friends.

In some cases, perhaps, this restitution may greatly diminish what we might leave
to

to our children,—what then! it would be SERM.
XIX.
better that my son should beg his bread
from door to door, than that he should live
in the greatest affluence on the fruits of his
father's dishonesty. The blessing of a just
God cannot be expected on what has been
unlawfully acquired; he himself has told
us, that he visits the iniquities of the pa-
rents on the children, and more particu-
larly, perhaps, where they have been en-
riched by their parents' crimes. In other
cases the restitution may be impossible to
be made, since what has been unjustly ac-
quired is very often either dissipated in
extravagance, or taken from us by God's
withdrawing his protection from our con-
cerns; when this happens, it is our duty
to feel and to express sorrow and contri-
tion, and to make all due acknowledge-
ments to the parties injured.

Next to the payment of our debts, and
restitution of what we wrongfully possess,
follows

SERM. follows the disposal of the remainder of our
XIX. substance.

And here permit me earnestly to exhort all those who have any worldly goods to dispose of, not to drive off making their wills to the last, but to do what they know to be so necessary, in the time of health and strength, when their memory is unimpaired, and their judgment strong and sound. It may be, they *know* it may be, that the next moment may number them with the dead,—and in what a distressed condition may they then leave those who are the nearest and dearest to them! But supposing that they should have some warning allowed them, the hour of sickness is not a proper hour for business of this kind; the terrors and wearisomeness, the pain, the anxiety, which that period usually brings with it, will find us sufficient employment. Besides, who knows but their faculties may be so weakened as to render them

them incapable of determining what disposal is right for them to make; those who are the most proper and the most able to advise them may be absent at the time, or may be artfully kept out of the way, and they may be prevailed upon to do what justice and their own feelings (in their right judgments) would equally condemn. If, however, they should have omitted this necessary settlement of their affairs before, they must hasten to make up for it then, and to do what they can. Should they have any reason to suspect that the shock of disease has unsettled their understandings, they will do well to consult with some disinterested advisers, and not to trust entirely to themselves, much less to those who are interested to mislead them. It is not practicable to give any general counsel on the manner in which your worldly substance should be disposed of—particular circumstances preclude any rules from reach-

SERM.
XIX.

SERM.

XIX.

reaching all cases: it is, however, obvious that those who are by blood and nature allied to us, those to whom we have designedly given expectations of profiting by us, and those with whom we have lived in mutual returns of kindness and friendship, have the fairest claims on our favour.—

Where we have children, perhaps, there is scarcely any thing which should exclude them. It may be observed further, that neither fanciful partiality nor resentment should be allowed to prevail to any considerable degree. It is high time, when we are leaving the world, to eradicate all those passions which have not a sound foundation; not what it would please us to do, but what justice and propriety demand from us, should regulate and govern our proceeding. They whose fortunes will allow it, after they have taken care of their own families, and have considered those who have reasonable expectations on them,

will

will do well, according to their circumstances, to remember the poor: any be-
quests to public charities are peculiarly
useful; but it is neither our duty, nor is
it, I think, justifiable, to do this to the ma-
terial injury of any very near connexions:
we must be aware also how we think to
atone, by profusion of charity at our deaths,
for the neglect of it during our lives: the
smallest sums taken from our own wants,
while we are well, and able ourselves to
enjoy them, and applied regularly to the
relief of the distressed, carry with them
infinitely more merit than thousands be-
stowed in the same way at our deaths.

SERM.
XIX.

Another duty, which I mentioned as expected from the sick, is to ask pardon and to make all the atonement in their power, to those whom they know that they have injured. This, as at all times it is incumbent on us, is doubtless more peculiarly so at the approach of death, and under apprehensions

SERM. hensions of the day of judgment. The

XIX.

last opportunity of doing what, perhaps, ought to have been done long ago, is arrived; if, therefore, we have defrauded our neighbour, as I have before said, we must make restitution; if we have hurt his character by our calumnies, we must recant what we have advanced to his prejudice; if we have been injurious to him in any other respect, have oppressed, harrassed, or insulted him, we must sincerely ask his forgiveness, and seek with him a thorough reconciliation. And while we are endeavouring to appease those whom we have injured, we must, in our turn, be ready to pardon those who have injured us: to retain our resentment at such a time, would be to cherish a temper of mind very unfit for that place, to which we are to hope we are going. It is right likewise not only to subdue all anger in our own minds, but to give some outward token of it either to the parties
them.

themselves, who have offended us, or if that SERM.
XIX.
be impracticable or inconvenient, to those
who may be around us at the time. Other
duties are required from us when we are
sick, which respect our fellow-creature, and
which, though they do not come precisely
under the head of justice, are scarcely less
important, such as kindness and consider-
ation for those who attend upon us in our
illness, and seasonable advice adapted to
their particular situations, and drawn from
ours. It is more peculiarly necessary to
press the first of these, because sickness is
too apt to be accompanied with peevishness
and impatience, to cause us to imagine
things amiss beyond what they really are,
and to make us expect from our friends
more care, skill, and dexterity, than they
are capable of exerting.

This is a propensity which it is our duty
to do our best to overcome, and that for
various reasons; in the first place, it in-
creases

S E R M.
XIX.

creases our own sufferings, which patience and resignation would greatly mitigate; and secondly, it is very unjust to our friends, to whose cares we ought to remember we are so much obliged; who go through so fatiguing and disagreeable an office on our account, and whom our frowardness is very unlikely to make more diligent in their attendance, but will, most probably, discourage and abate their zeal in our service.

Seasonable advice to those around us, in our dying hours, drawn from our own situation, and adapted to theirs, is, as I observed, a duty particularly incumbent on us. The time is awful, and the hearts of the dying person's friends are commonly deeply touched, and open to any impression, which, in his last words, he may wish to make upon them: this is an opportunity which ought not to be neglected; he ought to represent to them what will, full surely, be his own feelings, the vanity and empti-

emptiness of all earthly concerns, the little pleasure with which he now looks back on any worldly acquirements which he may have made, on any worldly accomplishments which he may have possessed; the recollection of having been regular and constant in the performance of his duty towards God—just and charitable according to his means, in his behaviour towards his fellow-creatures—and sober, chaste, and temperate, in his own personal conduct,—he will assure them, are now his only comforts;—on the other hand, if unhappily he has not this to say, he may tell them, for he will full certainly experience it, of the remorse which he feels for the sins of which he has been guilty, and for the various virtues which he has omitted—and how very different a course of life he will pursue in future, if it should please God to restore him to health. Let him not fear to declare this resolution, from the

SERM.
XIX
~~~~~



SERM. apprehension that if he recovers he shall  
XIX. disgrace himself by not adhering to it,  
since he cannot but know how deeply he is  
interested in it; and perhaps the having  
openly declared his intentions, may be one  
means of keeping him to them in case of  
his recovery.

They who are able may say much more  
than what I have recommended, but all  
may say this; all may say, how much plea-  
sure the recollection of their good actions  
gives them, and how much concern and  
terror the remembrance of their vices;  
all may recommend the former, and ear-  
nestly conjure those who are around them  
to avoid the latter. The good may thus  
confirm the virtuous impression which  
their lives have made on their friends,  
by this counsel at their deaths; and the  
wicked may in some measure (at least it  
is all which they can do) weaken the bad  
effects of the past vicious example which  
they



they have set. I should now proceed to **SERM.**  
point out those duties of the dying person, **XIX.**  
which have for their object God and the  
salvation of his own soul ; but this I must  
reserve for a future opportunity.

*[Faint bleed-through from reverse side]*

I have been thinking of the  
 various parts of the world  
 which have been discovered  
 since the year 1492, and I have  
 been thinking of the various  
 parts of the world which have  
 been discovered since the year  
 1492, and I have been thinking  
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 which have been discovered since  
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## SERMON XX.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE SICK.

### SECOND PART.

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ISAIAH XXXVIII. LATTER PART OF V. 1.

*Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die,  
and not live.*

IN a late discourse on this text, I proposed SERM.  
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to point out the principal duties incumbent  
on us in the hour of sickness. These, I  
observed, were of two kinds, temporal and  
spiritual; the first relating to our fellow-  
creatures, the latter to God and our own  
souls.



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souls. The duties which relate to our fellow-creatures I have already laid before you; to those due from us to God, and which have for their object the salvation of our souls, I shall beg your attention at present.

The first of these which I shall mention is patience. This virtue is the more necessary for us to practise, inasmuch as without it we shall be totally unable to practise any other. Turbulence or despondency under our pains and danger will equally unfit us either for performing, or even perceiving, what we ought to do. To be resigned to our afflictions, be they of what kind they may, is likewise the express command of God, and that in such a multitude of places in the scripture, that it is not necessary to mention them: in conformity with this command, all the most eminent personages whose history is recorded in the sacred writings were re-

mark-

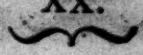
markably distinguished by their patient submission to the evils which befel them. You remember the numberless, heavy calamities which were experienced by Job; what were his sentiments under them?—"The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" And when to the other evils, with which he was oppressed, the most loathsome and painful disease was added, how nobly does he support himself under it! The recollection of the past blessings, which he had enjoyed, engaged his gratitude more than his present sufferings excited his affliction. "Shall we receive good (exclaimed he) at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" You have not forgot the resigned answer of Eli to the prophetic threatnings of Samuel:—"It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Indeed this consideration—that our suffering is from God, as it should reconcile us

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SERM. to all other afflictions, loss of property,  
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reputation, friends,—so also should it reconcile us to the loss of health, and to the apparently approaching loss of life, not only when it pleases God to deprive us of our substance, to cross us in our hopes and expectations, and to snatch from us our nearest connexions ; but when, in language of scripture, “ he puts forth his hand, and “ touches our bone and our flesh, and “ threatens to take from us that breath “ which he bestowed, even then ought we “ to bend submissively to his decrees.”—But patience under the pains of sickness is not only our duty, it is our interest also, and that both with regard to this world and the next. To fret, to repine, to give encouragement either to peevishness or despondency, will greatly increase any evil with which we may be afflicted, and more particularly sickness ; while, by an opposite behaviour, we may frequently  
alle-



alleviate it, and that not only in idea, but SERM.  
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in reality. It is our interest to be patient, 

likewise, with a view to our condition in the next world; whatever evils befall us here are capable of being converted into the greatest good to us hereafter by our conduct under them; and of all proper conduct, resignation is the ground and foundation. Another duty which I shall mention as necessary for the sick to exercise, is self-examination. This is required of us at certain seasons during the whole course of our lives, but it is more particularly our duty, when the last opportunity of making our peace with God is apparently arrived; then, especially, it behoves us to search what sort of persons we are, and what is our chance of eternal salvation.—

This self-examination is made by comparing our conduct with the rule of our duty; by asking ourselves, whether we have been habitually pious towards God? whether we  
have

SERM. have offered our prayers and thanksgivings  
XX. to him regularly at his house, on his own  
peculiar day? and whether we have been  
constant in the performance of the same  
pious offices, morning and evening, at our  
own homes?

We must inquire, likewise, whether we  
have behaved to our fellow-creatures as we  
could reasonably expect that they should  
behave towards us; whether we have been  
just, charitable, gentle, forgiving. This  
self-examination may to too many be a  
melancholy task; but this ought to be a  
strong argument with us not to act wrong  
in health, for if we do, we must take the  
consequences; and it is better for us to feel  
the most bitter remorse, and to undergo  
the most alarming terrors in this world,  
while they may possibly be the means of  
bettering our condition hereafter, than to  
stifle all thought and reflection, and die  
with all our unrepented sins upon our  
heads. For



For the reason why this self-examination is requisite is, that it is an introduction to the practice of two other duties, confession and repentance. By confession is meant, not confession to men but to God; though the former in some cases, where the offender is in doubt what sort of atonement he ought to make, may be necessary for him in order to receive spiritual advice and consolation; but however this may be, confession of our sins to God, as at all times, so especially at the approach of death, is indispensable; it is indispensable in order to our repenting and obtaining forgiveness; if we do not own that we have been guilty, how can we express sorrow for our sins, or intreat God to pardon us!

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After confession follows repentance;—this is made up of sorrow that we have offended God, and endangered our own souls, and a firm purpose to reform our lives, if

it



SERM. it should please the Almighty to prolong  
XX.

them. Let not, however, any one flatter himself that the practice of these on his death-bed will avail him, if he lived in the constant neglect of them before; I very much fear that it will not; however, it is all that is left for him—he must do what he can; proper behaviour at this awful period will probably better his situation, and cannot make it worse; but what I mean is, that it would be the height of folly and presumption to trust to it entirely.

The repentance exercised at our latter end, ought only to be the more solemn completion of what we have lived in the constant habit of before. Entreaty for God's pardon and acceptance, is to follow this confession and repentance; and this we are to offer up, not trusting in any fancied merits of our own, not confiding in our tears and supplications, but in the mercy of God, and in the merits and mediation

diation of Jesus Christ. The sick are cut off from the duties of active life, and it is therefore more highly incumbent on them to dedicate a great portion of their time to religious meditations and religious employments; I do not say that they are to use them to such a degree as to bring themselves into any farther danger, by terrifying themselves into a state of melancholy or despair, but that in general, particularly in long illnesses, the above employment of their time will be a source of the greatest comfort and satisfaction. And here let me caution those, whom illness prevents for any considerable time from engaging in the duties of active life, not too greatly to lament and repine at it: God knows what is best for us; in whatever state it pleases him to place us, that is our trial; it is according to our behaviour in that state that we shall be rewarded or punished by him; from those to whom he gives health and strength

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from those whom he visits with disease, and confines to the chamber of sickness, he requires another. Each may have their separate merits, and the sick may deserve as much of God as the well. Let not then the sick complain that they are cut off from the means of doing good; they have no reason; their example may be productive of the greatest good; their patience, their piety, their reliance on the divine goodness, may be more highly beneficial to those around them, than the greatest earthly kindnesses which they could confer. I have already recommended patience under what we are actually suffering; but it may be necessary, likewise, to caution you against encouraging too great apprehensions of what you imagine that you may suffer. This is necessary, because there are persons who think they could support their present pains with tolerable fortitude,  
but



but who at times sink under the idea of SERM.  
the greater sufferings, which they suspect XX.  
still to await them. Surely this is dis-  
quieting themselves in vain: all their me-  
lancholy terrors cannot avert the decrees  
of the Almighty; and in the mean time  
the despondency to which they give way is  
in itself criminal, as it implies a distrust  
of God, and it likewise greatly aggravates  
their actual afflictions, and deprives them  
of what little comfort they might expe-  
rience. "Sufficient for the day is the evil  
"thereof." Let them bear, as well as they  
can, what God at present inflicts, and let  
them trust to his goodness to support them  
under the sorrows which may remain. If  
they have that faith, and use that suppli-  
cation which they ought, they may be sure  
that he will do so. Besides, we in general  
bear afflictions much better than we ex-  
pect; they are not always so terrible as  
they appear to be at a distance. As to the  
pang

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pang of death itself, the separation of the soul from the body, we have no reason to think it exceeds in poignancy what the generality have more than once undergone in the course of their lives. There are many persons who, when they approach to the brink of the grave, are assailed by such terrors, as to be unable to make any exertions, either temporal or spiritual. But this is very wrong, and what we ought to strive against with all our power. Our state may possibly not be so bad as what the weakness of mind which frequently accompanies weakness of body represents it. If we have only to charge ourselves with common failings, we may reasonably hope that this is the case; but at any rate, to suffer ourselves to be so frightened as to be unable to attend to any of the offices of religion, is absurd, as it cannot make our case better, and will probably make it much worse. It is indeed a fearful thing

for



for the guilty to fall into the hands of the living God; but while there is life there is generally hope; and proper behaviour, with sincere resolutions of reforming, if we recover, may induce God to try us a little time longer, or to accept our repentance, if we die; whereas doing nothing at all must in every light be hurtful to us. As it is appointed to all men once to die, those who have reached any advanced period of life cannot, even with the appearance of reason, complain when they are called on to partake of the common lot: but the reluctance of the young to quit the world seems at first sight more allowable, and there are others besides themselves who hastily term their sentence hard. But it should be remembered, that as God gave, so he has a right at any time to take away; that we exist a moment, is owing to his goodness, and therefore there can be no ground for murmurs when he decrees that

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XX.



SERM. we shall live no longer. Besides, we are  
XX.

all fully apprized of the uncertainty of our continuance here; how very small a portion of the human species, comparatively, lives to be old; and to how much smaller a portion can their length of days be called a blessing. Too many have reason to wish, either from crimes into which they fall, or misfortunes which they undergo, that it had pleased God to take them to himself in their prime. If the dying person be unfit for a change, it is his own fault; he must endeavour to do what he can, and others must take warning by him; but if he be prepared, how happy is his case;—  
“speedily, perhaps, is he taken away, lest  
“wickedness should alter his understand-  
“ing, or deceit beguile his soul.” Such are the virtues which we should practise, and such the sentiments which we should entertain in the hour of sickness. I do not, however, pretend to have exhausted the  
sub-

subject; much more might be said on it; SERM.  
and when you come to the last scenes of <sup>XX.</sup>  
this life, much more may be necessary for  
you to know and to practise: you will do  
well, therefore, to consult on that awful  
occasion with your prudent and sincere  
friends, and more particularly with your  
minister. It is clearly his duty, and I  
should hope that in most cases it will be  
his pleasure, to be of all the assistance to  
you in his power. We would not intrude  
ourselves upon any one; but when we are  
actuated by feelings suitable to our sacred  
office, we cannot but experience the great-  
est satisfaction in having our assistance  
called for, and in enjoying the opportunity  
of smoothing the bed of sickness, and pre-  
paring, to the best of our abilities, the  
dying person to stand before his judge.

I shall conclude with earnestly request-  
ing you frequently to place before your  
minds the solemn period, concerning which



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I have been discoursing ; a period, to which we are all hastily approaching, and at which some of us, most probably, shall very soon arrive. Such meditations, frequently repeated, will be the most powerful motives with us so to conduct ourselves, as can alone give us fortitude to support the bodily pains to which we may be doomed, and alone enable us to meet our dissolution undisturbed by anguish and terror, and inspire us with a decent confidence to stand before our judge, and afford us a well-grounded expectation of receiving a favourable sentence.

SERMON



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## SERMON XXI.

OF CASTING YOUR CARE UPON GOD.

I PETER V. VII.

*Casting all your care upon him, for he careth  
for you.*

To cast their care upon God, is one of the SERM.  
XXI.  
duties which the Apostle enjoins his disciples, towards the conclusion of this epistle; and he persuades them to the observation of the injunction by the strongest of all arguments—"for God careth for you."

In the following discourse, I shall explain what is meant by casting your care

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upon God; secondly, what you are to understand by God's caring for you; and, lastly, I shall endeavour to shew the force which there is in God's caring for you, to induce you to cast your care upon him.

No command can be so plainly given but that some will mistake it; and there have been persons who have imagined that, by being ordered to cast their care upon God, was meant that they should take no care or trouble, themselves, of any kind—that they should be altogether idle—and not in any shape concern themselves with earthly affairs;—but this is both contrary to reason and to many express commands of scripture:—it is contrary to reason, to suppose that we should be sent into this world and be required to pay no attention to its concerns—it is contrary also to reason to suppose that so many faculties, so many talents, so many passions, so much ability to be useful to our fellow-creatures, should



should have been bestowed on us to no end;—and it is contrary to many express commands of scripture, by which we are enjoined to provide for ourselves and our families, and to be industrious, that we may have it in our power to be charitable; neither of which can be done without some sort of care. God expects from us exertions of this kind, and has made it a part of our duty to use them; but the care which the text commands us to part from, is that over-solicitude, that anxiety about the things of this world, which entirely absorbs our attention and takes it off from the things of the next—this the apostle exhorts us to banish, and to leave the object of it to the providence of God. We may, with propriety, do all we innocently can, to procure the good and avoid the evil of this life: but, when we have done all, we must leave the event to heaven, and not disquiet and torment ourselves

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SERM.

XXI.

about it. The nature and meaning of the command of "casting our care upon God," being thus shortly explained, the argument by which we are persuaded to obey it, follows—"for he careth for you."—God observes, minutely, the affairs of men, and orders them for the best; we ought, therefore, to leave our concerns in his hands, and to rest contented with his disposal of them.

If you allow that there is a God, and that he made the world, I think it will follow, of course, that he governs it; for is it credible that a being who has been at the pains of raising such a magnificent structure, who has furnished it with such an infinite variety of creatures so admirably suited to the use and service of each other, should, as soon as he had finished it, entirely desert his own work:—is it not rather to be concluded that he still continues to superintend it, that he still continues to pervade

vade and attend to what he has formed, and particularly to that noblest part of it, man! SERM.  
XXI.

Such was always the opinion of the best and wisest of the heathens before the times of Christianity; they not only believed that there was an all-powerful being, who created all things, but that he also perpetually had an eye to and directed them; and though perhaps some of them thought that this his providence was confined to considerable affairs, while those of less importance were left to their natural course, yet with us Christians the matter is otherwise; we are assured by scripture, in many places, that not even the most inconsiderable thing happens without his agency or permission; that his observation and interference are not partial and confined, but universal, and over all his works. We are told that God's providence extends to objects the least and most inconsiderable,—  
“to the grass of the field, which to-day  
“is,



SERM. " is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven;

XXI.

" to the fowls of the air, even to the spar-

" rows, two of which are sold for a far-

" thing, and yet not one of them falleth

" to the ground without God." And if

this be the case in these small instances,

how much more is it likely to be so in

that of man, who was created after God's

own image, and a little lower than the

angels! of man, to whom dominion over

the whole creation was allotted; of man,

for whose instruction the Son of God de-

scended upon earth, and for whose salva-

tion he submitted to a cruel and ignomi-

nious death on the cross. To the conduct

and affairs of a creature thus highly born,

thus nobly allied and thus greatly favoured,

God does certainly attend most minutely;

all his thoughts, words, and actions, are

exactly noted, all his concerns are ob-

served, " even the very hairs of his head

" are numbered." Nor is God merely an

indif-



indifferent spectator of the events of human life, but as occasion demands, he is likewise an active disposer of them; he not only sees what is transacting, but, as he thinks proper, interferes also: he frequently baffles the best contrived schemes of human wisdom, where the mind of him, who laid them, proud and self-conceited, thinks it impossible that the issue should be different from what he had designed and expected; while, on the other hand, he often blesses the endeavours of the humble and the ignorant,—of those who rely not on their own abilities, but commit themselves to his protection, with unlooked-for and apparently impossible successes.

Men doubt of the universal observation of God, because they are apt to measure the divine faculties by their own: they find how hard it is for themselves to attend to more than one thing at a time, and therefore they are with difficulty per-

sued

SERM  
XXI.

SERM. suaded that any other being can attend to  
 XXI. such an infinite number; but this arises  
 from their narrow and contracted notions  
 of the divine perfections: they forget that  
 God made the world, that he still sus-  
 tains it, and that if he were to withdraw  
 his support, all would again be reduced to  
 nothing: they forget that his wisdom and  
 power are without bounds, and that he  
 consequently can observe and direct every  
 thing without the smallest degree of trou-  
 ble and disquiet.

But even of those who allow the univer-  
 sal attention of God to what passes here  
 below, there are some, perhaps, who doubt  
 of his interference, because they see many  
 disorders in the world, and meet with many  
 occurrences which they think hard to be  
 reconciled with the government of an all-  
 good and all-powerful ruler; because it  
 often goes well with the wicked, while the  
 righteous are in trouble and affliction.

But



But this is no argument, or at least it is SERM.  
XXI.  
easily answered;—this life is a state of  
trial, it is but as a moment in comparison  
with the eternity which is to follow; what,  
if virtue do suffer here for a few fleeting  
years, and vice appear triumphant! there  
is a day coming when this seeming incon-  
sistency will be fully rectified, when the  
providence of God will appear, and his jus-  
tice be vindicated in the sight of men and  
of angels, when no one shall have reason,  
either to glory in the wickedness which he  
has committed, or to complain of the ca-  
lamities which he has undergone. Nay,  
even in this life, the apparent prosperity  
which is enjoyed by the vicious is often  
either the cause or the forerunner of their  
future misery or destruction; while the  
afflictions, under which the righteous are  
seen to labour, frequently produce in their  
effects honour and happiness. Elevated  
was the situation, and many were the cir-  
cumstances



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cumstances which conspired together to the felicity of the Amalekite Haman; yet, amidst all his good fortune, as he himself has confessed, he was miserable: yet did all his grandeur only serve to expose and conduct him to an ignominious and deserved death.—On the other hand, it was through many hardships and much anguish that the virtuous Joseph was raised to greatness and to power: those who judged hastily might have concluded him “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,” and that his rise from some situations of his life was impossible; yet were these sufferings and this depression in the hands of him who maketh all things to work together for good to them who love him, but so many steps in his ascent, but so many causes of his subsequent glory: they conducted him to a station, in which he ruled with honour, and saved from famine a great kingdom, and had the inestimable  
satis-

satisfaction, also, to be the preserver of his own family. These are two instances, out of a thousand which might be brought, of the deceitfulness of outward appearances; they may serve to teach us not always to judge those happy or miserable, who appear so to human eyes. But it is not on what occurs in this world that I rest my cause; it is on that future day of retribution, when the inequalities of this present life will certainly be all redressed. From what has been said, I should hope that the providence of God will readily be allowed, or, in other words, that it will appear evident that “he careth for us.”—We will now see, lastly, of what force this consideration is, to persuade us to obey the precept of the text—“to cast our care upon him.”

Those who have observed that their best laid schemes have been disconcerted, that where they have had the greatest reason  
to



SERM. to flatter themselves with success, they  
XXI. have reaped nothing but disappointment; if they had any friend, who was greatly their superior in wisdom and in power, and who at the same time had their interests as much at heart as themselves, surely they would apply themselves to him, and would rejoice highly if they could prevail upon him to undertake the management of their concerns. Such a friend is God; he sees at one view what is most for our good; he is able to bring it about without the smallest exertion, and he loves us so entirely, that if we do but endeavour to deserve it, we may be assured that he will bring it about. Who would not be contented and joyful, when he recollects that his affairs are under the protection of infinite wisdom and power, in conjunction with infinite love and goodness! Who would not rest satisfied with whatever calamities may befall him, when he remembers



bers that they are inflicted or permitted by one, who (if they are patiently submitted to) will over-rule them to a much greater good. The consideration, therefore, of the providence of God, ought not only to banish our anxiety about future events, but likewise to console and support us under the pressure of actual affliction. It was this consideration which silenced David, when the bitterness of his sorrows almost tempted him to repine:—"I held my peace, and spake not a word, because thou, Lord, didst it." It was this consideration which produced the pious submission of Eli to the prophetic threatenings of Samuel:—"It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." It was this consideration which sustained the courage of Job under still more heavy calamities, and enabled him to cry out in the midst of anguish (apparently too exquisite for humanity to support)—"The Lord hath given, and the

SERM.  
XXI.

SERM. "Lord hath taken away; blessed be the  
 XXI.  
 "name of the Lord." We cannot see the works of God from the beginning to the end, and therefore sometimes hastily condemn; but when the veil of human flesh shall be removed, when we shall be acquainted with the whole design of providence, and shall have penetrated to the last issue and result of all things, how shall we admire their wondrous beauty and proportion! The time will come when the judgment of God will break forth as the light, and his righteousness as the noon-day; when those apparent irregularities, which are to the ignorant stumbling-blocks, and to the wise foolishness, shall stand confessed, both by angels and men, to be worthy parts of that stupendous plan which was concerted by infinite wisdom and goodness, and carried into execution by infinite power.

Let



Let us be persuaded, then, to banish all painful anxiety as to what *may* happen, and all immoderate sorrow as to what has happened: let us not disquiet ourselves in vain: all our solicitude, all our impatience will be to no purpose; a greater power than we can control, orders our concerns for our good, if we deserve his favour; and if we do not, it is not by discontents and murmurs that we can hope to increase our merits. We may lawfully, it is our duty, to use our best endeavours to procure the good, and avoid the evil of life; such endeavours are the ordinary means by which all happiness is to be sought: but after having thus exerted ourselves, we should throw off all uneasiness as to the event; we should leave that to God, and if it pleaseth him to order it contrary to our wishes, we should patiently and cheerfully acquiesce in his determinations, well assured that the disappointments and

SERM.  
XXI.



SERM.

XXI.

afflictions of this world, which are but for a moment, will, if piously endured, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.



END OF VOL. I.